

A Thesis for the Ph. D. Degree.

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(c) Anti-Trust.

(a) Abu-~~Yusuf~~.



## Chapter III.

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AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS FOR THE ph.D DEGREE

"ASPECTS OF LITERARY CRITICISM AND THEIR  
INFLUENCE ON THE EARLY ABBASID POETS"

Three aspects of literary criticism are here treated. They are language, contents and prosody. The first chapter seeks to show that in the early days literary studies were undertaken not for their own sake but as an adjunct to the study of the Kor'an. The language of poetry received the particular attention of philologists whose object was to furnish material for the interpretation of the Kor'an. These philologists held the old poets in high esteem and conversely regarded later poets as inferior in language.

The poets who came after al-Parazdak strove to liberate themselves from the limitations imposed upon them by the philologists. Many unsuccessful attempts to do this took place up to the time of Bashshar. With this poet a new type of poetry appeared.

In chapter two four poets are studied, they are; Bashshar b.Burd, Al-Sayyid al-Himyari, Abul-Atahiya, and Abu-Tammam. It is the object of this chapter to illustrate the long struggle which finally culminated in the emancipation of poetry from the restriction of the classical conception.

In chapters three and four we shall set forth the requirement of the critics with regard to the several poetic forms such as panegyric, satire, elegy, and love poetry. It will be pointed out



that while the critics succeeded in clearly specifying the nature and requirements of these four aspects of poetry, a full understanding of descriptive poetry escaped them. They were, moreover, unable to impose their authority upon the poets. The latter were not only independent of the critics but were in fact able to direct the literary movement according to their own desires and conceptions. Various poets are studied in order to illustrate this view.

In chapter five the connection between prosody and singing is illustrated and the theory of the perfection of al-Khabil's prosody is refuted.

Chapter six traces the transition which occurred in singing and points to a similar transition in poetry. New metres consequently appeared and Abul-Atahiya and Razin the metrician are considered as having been instrumental in bringing about a fundamental change in prosody. Abul-Atahiya developed two new metres which were classified by the critics while Razin produced a further metre, as yet unclassified. If this metre can be accepted as entirely new, the total number of Arabic metres stand at seventeen and not sixteen as formerly held.

N. HANI  
S. O. S



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**Chapter IV.**

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Introduction.

The title of the thesis suggests that it is mainly concerned to illustrate the influence of the critics on the poets. Inevitably, however, the influence of the poets on the critics is also dealt with. The object of this thesis is to give an account of the critical canons which prevailed from the third to the first half of the fifth century of the Flight. Particular attention is paid to the influence of these canons on the early poets of this era.

The research, except on rare occasions, will be confined to the particular and factual.

We shall not deal with what the poets or critics ought respectively to have written or admired, but we shall deal with what they in fact did write and admire.

Thus we shall be concerned with the works of the poets and the critics themselves and shall but seldom have recourse to the opinions of later critics.



## Key to references

The title of the thesis suggests that it is mainly concerned to illustrate the influence of the critics on the poets. Inevitably, however, the influence of the poets on the critics becomes apparent and must therefore receive due consideration.

Finally, this research was carried out under the supervision of Prof. A. S. Tritton, to whom I am deeply indebted for advice and guidance most generously given. To him I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude.



Key to references

Agh: al-Aghani; Abul Faraj al-Isfahani, Bulak edition.

Agh (K): al-Aghani; Dar al-Kutub edition.

Ashshir: Ashshir Washshu'ra'; Ibn Kotaiba.

I'jaz: I'jaz al-Kor'an - al-Bakillani.

Ikā: al-'Ikā al-Farid - Ibn Abd Rabbihi.

Z.D.M.G.: Zeitschrift der Deutsch Morg. Ges.

J.A.O.S.: Journal of the American Oriental Society.

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(1) Al-Iḥṣān; "Al-Balaghah wa-Ilm Annafis" in the  
Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Fuad University,  
Cairo IV 1936



concerning this point CHAPTER I necessary to observe that the ideas and arguments of one sect will receive special consideration. Philologists, Grammarians and the language.

The Sunnites in general regarded Arabic as being as old "Religious impulses impelled the ancient Arabs towards the study of literature. They considered literature and literary learning as a means, not an end - a means towards understanding of religion".<sup>(1)</sup> Asakir pointed out that

"Arabic Language in general and that of poetry in particular was from the earliest days studied not as a social phenomenon nor as a human activity but because it was necessary to the study of the Koran. The Sunnites was,

The verse "God gave Adam knowledge of all things" gave rise to some important questions, outstanding among them the question of the nature of the Arabic language in general, a topic which was the initial and most important factor on which later studies were amplified. One

Before putting forward a detailed exposition of opinions

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(1) Al-Khuli; "Al-balaghah wa-'Ilm Annafs" in the Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Fuad University, Cairo IV 1936

(2) 1 : 31



concerning this point, it is necessary to observe that the ideas and arguments of one sect will receive special consideration; I refer to the Sunnites.

The Sunnites in general regarded Arabic as being as old as Adam. God, they alleged, must have revealed Arabic to Adam, as the Koran clearly shows.

Ibn 'Abbas held that "God certainly taught Adam these words we use nowadays".<sup>(1)</sup> Ibn 'Asakir pointed out that "Adam spoke Arabic when he was in paradise". Another authority remarked that "God taught Adam even . . . .<sup>(2)</sup> trivial things".

Arabic moreover according to the Sunnites was, eternal and divine. They put many restrictions in the way of those who wished to study it, so that it might be preserved from ambiguity and misuse.

"It should be taken", Ibn Faris alleged, "orally from authoritative transmitters who are trustworthy. One tradition which subsequently became common practice,

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(1) Tabari; Jami' al-Bayan, 1/170

(2) Suyuti; al-Muzhir, 1/28

(1) Suyuti; al-Muzhir, 1/137

(2) Suyuti; al-Muzhir, 1/138



"must be on one's guard against those who deal in  
(1) suppositions". Al-Khalil said "some savants have  
probably passed on to the people that which is not from  
the speech of the Arabs in order to create confusion".  
Ibn Faris says in this connection, "let him who wishes  
(2) to study language select men of confidence, honesty,  
justice and reliability". Al-Anbari made it clear that  
"it is strictly incumbent on the transmitters of language  
whether man or women, slaves or free, to be honest as it  
is also incumbent upon those who transmit traditions".  
These qualities were required because it is with language  
that we can understand interpretation whether literary  
(2) or allegorical. ~~seen through a medium of which he has no~~  
This attitude was applied by many philologists to the  
language of poetry as will subsequently be shown. ~~interpret~~  
These Sunnites by introducing literary studies into the  
field of religion, became in fact the founders of a  
tradition which subsequently became common practice.  
This tradition apparently had its origin in the assumption  
that the language of the Koran is not only divine,  
but also the purest and most perfect Arabic.

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(1) Suyuti; al-Muzhir, 1/137 ~~not heard the verse~~

(2) Suyuti; al-Muzhir, 1/138

(1) See: ~~Q100~~; Arabic Literature; 28



(1)  
They strove hard to prove their assumption by  
examining its words. The language of poetry was considered  
sufficiently pure and correct to serve as a good yard-  
stick for the examination of the Koran, and thus the  
collection and memorizing of the works of the pre-Islamic  
poets became necessary. (1)

Ibn 'Abbas was the first authority who used the old  
poetry as evidence in his interpretation. It is related  
that while Ibn Abbas was sitting in the court round  
the Ka'ba and the people were seated round him  
questioning him about the interpretation of the Koran,  
Nafi' said to Najdah "let us go to that man who dares to  
interpret the Koran through a medium of which he has no  
knowledge". They went to him and said "we wish to  
ask you about certain things in the Book of God, interpret  
to us and bring us confirmation from the speech of the  
Arabs, for indeed God only revealed the Koran in the  
clear tongue of the Arabs. Ibn Abbas said "ask me  
about what occurs to you". Nafi' said "tell me about  
the speech of God 'Anil yamini wa 'Anil shimali 'izin".  
Ibn 'Abbas "'izin" means circles of friends.

Nafi': "Do the Arabs know that?"

"Yes", Ibn 'Abbas said, "have you not heard the verse

---

(1) See: Gibb; Arabic Literature; 28



(1)  
of 'Abid Ibn al-Abras:

نجاوا بهر عون اليه من  
ياكونوا حول منبره عزيينا

This came to be the method of interpretation among those

(2) who followed Ibn Abbas. Men who proposed to undertake

this task had to show a profound understanding of

language and its precise shades of meaning as well as

(3) many other qualities. Umar Ibn al-Khattab in a

tradition said "no one should teach the Koran except

(4) those who have a good knowledge of language".

It was for the study of the Koran that the pre-

Islamic poetry was actually collected and subsequently

many treatises were compiled concerning the poets

themselves and their characteristics. As time went on

those who studied poetry continued to regard it as a means

to an end - namely that of Koranic interpretation.

Al-Jahidh asserted that the "scope of knowledge

(5) depends on evidence and examples". Al-Askari presented

his book "al-Sina'ain" as an explanation of the particular

knowledge by means of which the supernatural in the Koran

is recognized and understood. Elsewhere he stated

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(1) Suyuti; Itkan. 1/121 MuBarrid, Kamil 2/141 (A)

(2) Kodama; Nakd al-Nathr, 69 the disciplines of Arabic

(3) For other qualities, see: Zedah, Miftah al-Sa'adah

(4) Suyuti; al-Muzhir, 2/302 1/427

(5) Jahidh, Bayan, 1/150



clearly that the advantage of poetry is that evidence can be taken from it to bear on the obscure words of the Koran, (1) and upon the history of the prophet. Ibn Kotaibah endeavoured to write "full biographies of the well known poets whose poetry could be used as evidence". (2) Al-Suyuti (2) stated that "language was one of the religious studies and was used in the interpretation of the Koran". (3) From the anxiety of philologists to obtain a high standard in the knowledge of language in order to interpret the Koran there emerged the necessity of classifying the poets in several ranks. By means of this classification men who studied language could distinguish the authoritative poets from those who were less reliable. (4) Various classifications were made but the only one which was widely used, was that by which the poets were classified according to their era. This chronological classification apparently satisfied the philologists who employed it almost exclusively in their attempt to make the language of the old poets conform to their pre-conceived ideas on the Koran.

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(1) Sina'atun; 104

(2) Ashshir; 2 - 3

(3) According to "Haj Khalifa", the disciplines of Arabic are four, philology, grammar, rhetoric and literature.

(4) Every Muslim is compelled to know them because without them he could not study religion. Kashf (intro.); 55

(4) Bayan; 4 - 5. Ashshir; 17



Poets were held to fall into five groups namely; pre-Islamic, Mukhadhrams, Islamees, Muwallads, and Moderns. (1) Philologists held that the language of the first three classes was the purest and most reliable. It is free from curious words, grammatical faults and unusual dialects, qualities which are typical of the Muwallads. (2) Their language in fact was considered the best model of eloquence, the sole source of grammatical evidence and examples. (3) In practice the language of the first class was employed to show the purity of the Koranic language. "If you ask me about the foreign words of the Koran", Ibn Abbas says, "I would refer you to the Jahili poetry because it is the register of the Arabs". (4) In practice, Ibn Abbas apparently urged those who argued that the Koran is not absolutely pure, to compare it with the old poetry which was hitherto despised and neglected. (2) Men of religion - religion which invoked evil upon poets, and expelled them from the community found no other way of defending the integrity and proving the genuineness of the Koran than through the medium of the poets' despised art

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(1) Ibn Rashik; Al-Umdah 1/72

(2) Al-Baghdadi; al-Khizannah 1/20-25

(3) Evidence of rhetoric might be taken from any class.

(4) Suyuti, Itkan, 1/1206. Al-Umdah, 1/11



Others, however, rejected this use of poetry on the ground that the Koran itself condemned poetry and the poets, and thus commentators tried earnestly to advance a convincing justification of their method in order to obviate a problem wherein lay the seeds of great dispute. Some of them said "we try to discover the foreign words of the Koran by examining the Jahili poetry because God said 'we made it an Arabic Koran'".<sup>(1)</sup> Another authority proclaimed that he trusted the Jahilees, although they were unbelievers, and that he depended on their poetry because their language was pure. Strange as it seems nearly all the philologists followed the opinion of the commentators and put it in practice. Abu 'Amir Ibn al-'Ala' considered nothing poetry except that of the ancients. In reference to him al-Asma'i said "I was in his company for eight years, and I did not hear him adduce a single Islamic verse as an argument".<sup>(2)</sup> This was the opinion of his disciples and followers such as Al-Asma'i himself and Ibn al-'Arabi. Every one of them held that belief about his contemporaries and thought

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(1) 23 : 2, al-Mashir; 2/246

(2) AL-'Umdah; 1/57 Hissat al-Shufra; 228

(3) Maghaddi, Khizamat; 1/23 was 1/12

(4) Nicholson, Literary History of the Arabs; 285



highly of those who preceded them. There is no other reason for this inclination than their need of poetry to use as evidence and their lack of confidence in what the Moderns produced. They in fact exceeded all normal and reasonable bounds in that they relied not only on the mature and reliable poets of the Jahiliya but even on immature and unreliable youths. (1) The Muwallads, even the eminent poets among them, were rejected on the ground that they were unreliable. (2) In spite of that Later philologists who ventured to employ the Muwallads' poetry as evidence faced severe criticism. Sibawaihi was reproached because he trusted Bashshar. It was said that he was frightened by Bashshar and acknowledged his poetry only to protect himself from the latter's biting satire. (2) Al-Zamakhshari was blamed when he used verses of Abu-Tammam as evidence. (3) Respect for the old language consequently encouraged the Rawis to neglect in their turn the later poets and their technique. "To have been born after Islam was in itself a proof of inferiority". (4) Thus preference brought them to

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(1) Suyuti; al-Muzhir; 1/140

(2) Agh; 3/69. Risalat al-Ghufran; 228

(3) Baghdadi, Khizanah; 1/22 was 1/12

(4) Nicholson, Literary History of the Arabs; 285



delight in the rough words and stark ideas and images of the Bedouins. They followed the tribes wherever they settled and lived among them in order to acquire their language - a language both virile and pure. Many poets among the Muwallads made this excursion into the desert in order to acquire a high degree of linguistic proficiency. (1) Outstanding among them were Bashshar who lived a long time with Benu-Akil and Abu-Nuwas who lived a year in the desert for the same purpose. (2) In spite of that neither of them were regarded as authoritative and reliable simply because they were both of too late an era. Yet this was not in itself the major consideration which influenced the judgement of the philologists. There was another factor which seems to have affected them profoundly and to have given rise to a prejudice against the later poets, namely, the new civilization and its consequences. Poets in general participated in the flourishing civilization and adapted their poetry to its various aspects. Hence they produced a great quantity of poetry which bore, as we will see, little resemblance to that of the ancients either in language or contents. This movement did not appeal

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(1) Agh (K): 3/150. 1/403. Ashshir: 111 - 115.

(2) Ibn Mandhur, Akhbar Abi Nuwas 1/12

(3) Agh: 13/47.

(4) Al-Akhar: 1/212.



to many of the grammarians and philologists who would not admit the relevance of the new civilization or even the primitive urban life in poetry. For this reason they even neglected certain poets of the Jahiliya.

Adi Ibn Zaid and Abu-Dawud al-Iyadi ceased to be considered as poets of the first rank because they were townsmen and this made their words and images of lesser value. (1)

Abu Amr said "the Arabs did not recite Adi's poetry because he was a Christian". (2) They, however, appreciated Dul Rummah who was much later than Adi and his fellow. They delighted in his archaic and tortuous style and praise him above his merit. It was said "that poetry began with Imru'al Kais and ended with Dul-Rumah". (3)

A similar attitude was shown towards the tribes themselves. The philologists and grammarians distrusted the language of any tribe who lived near to or travelled to the settled countries. Lakhm and Judam were rejected because they were neighbours of the Copts of Egypt, and Chassan, Iyad and Kudhaan because they were neighbours of the inhabitants of Damascus who were Christians. (4)

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(1) Agh; 2/18. Ashshir; 111. Wasatah; 47. Agh; 15/95.

Encyclopaedia, I. 1/403. Ashshir; 111 - 115.

Shikho, Shu'ara; 2/465

(2) Ashshir; 115.

(3) Agh; 15/47. of his lexicon XI. Ibn Rashik stated

(4) Al-Muzhir; 1/212. of the Higher portion . . . are those of Aja Hawazin. Umdah 1/55



It is related of Abu-Zaid that he said "I do not say "the Arabs say" unless I have heard it (i.e. the words) from one of the following: Beshr Ibn Hawazin, and Benu Kilab and Benu Hilab, or from the people of higher portion of the lower region or of the lower of the higher".<sup>(1)</sup> This attitude had serious consequences in its practical application when both philologists and grammarians started to apply it to the task of criticism. They had to all intents, language established the foundations of practical criticism upon which the later critics largely depended. Their judgements were built on a chronological and grammatical basis rather than upon any sense of aesthetic values. The oldest verses to them were invariably and of necessity the finest. One example may serve to show the basis of their approach and the obscurity of their rules. al-Thalil Ibrahim of Mousil said: I recited these verses to al-Asma'i: "Is there a way to get one glance at your face to quench the burning thirst of my desire? That which means little to you means much to me, and the little about her whom you love means much". They quickly came He said "by God this is the Khisrawani silk, whose poem do you recite to me?" For similar examples look

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(1) Lane; preface of his lexicon XI. Ibn Rashik stated that the inhabitants of the Higher portion . . . . are

(2) those of Ajz Hawazin. Umdah 1/55



- "They were composed last night".  
"By God", he said immediately, "there is no doubt that the  
traces of artificiality are apparent in them".<sup>(1)</sup>

We have indicated that philologists and grammarians were strict adherents of the ancients and their productions. They scorned the Muwallads and rejected their works and methods. The poets soon came to realize the predilection of the grammarians and their liking for the harsh language and peculiar Bedouin images. They consequently endeavoured to acquire these qualities partly to show their capabilities and partly to gain the favour of the grammarians. Yet, they were rejected and failed in their desire merely because they were born in too late an era. Dispute became inevitable especially when the philologists claimed to be superior to the poets. It is stated that al-Khalil said "You, all the poets, are a group who indeed follow me. I am the rudder of the ship. If I praise you and I am satisfied with your composition you will be popular, otherwise you will be unpopular".<sup>(2)</sup>  
The poets naturally sought means to restore their dignity and re-establish their independence. They quickly came

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(1) Wasata, 47. For similar examples look

(a) Bayan, 3/196

(1) (b) Sina'atayn, 33  
(c) Muwazanah, 10

(2) Agh: 17/16



to the conclusion that a counter rejection would be the most fruitful and successful retort.

The dispute appeared in its earlier form between al-Farazdak and the grammarians when these latter started to set forth the rules of grammar. They tried to justify the irregularities of the ancients which did not conform to their rules, while, on the other hand, they considered those of the Muwallads unjustifiable. Abdullah Ibn Ishak used frequently to correct al-Farazdak and to check him in poetry. Al-Farazdak constantly satirized the grammarians and ridiculed their arguments, particularly those of Abdullah. He composed a verse which runs:

"If Abdullah was a client I would satirize him, but Abdullah is a client of clients".

ولو كان عبد الله مولى هجوته      ولكن عبد الله مولى مواليا

Abdullah was not concerned about his satire, he only said to al-Farazdak "you have made a mistake, you should have said: "مولى موالي" (1)

Ibn Abu Ishak once heard al-Farazdah recite:

"Time which grows, oh Ibn Affan, destroyed my worth and reduced it to nothing".

دعس زمان يا بن عفان لم يدع      من المال الا مسحتاً أو مجلفاً

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(1) Ibn al-Anbari; Nuzhat al-Alibba; 24



Ibn Ishak said to him, "according to what grammatical rule do you put " " in the nominative case"?

Al-Farazdak replied, "according to that rule whereby you<sup>(1)</sup> are irritated and annoyed".

In another story Ibn al-Mundir himself urged Abu-Ubaidah to

Less than half a century later a fierce controversy developed when Bashshar, as we will see in the next chapter, condemned the philologists as pedantic. He made a division of the two fundamentally different things, namely, the art of poetry and the mechanical task of collecting and commenting on it. Thus he satirized the philologists who criticized his poetry.<sup>(2)</sup>

In so doing he set a precedent for those who followed him. Abu-Nuwas denounced Abu-Ubaida's judgement on Jarir and al-Farazdak on the ground that Abu-Ubaida did not practise composition.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Ibn al-Anbari; Nuzhat al-Alibba'; 25. Ashshir; 299

(2) Al-Marzubani; al-Muwashshah; 247

(3) Al-Umdah; 2/83

(4) Agh: 17/11. The story goes on that Khalaf was annoyed. He took a plate full of sauce and threw it at the poet.

(5) Agh: 17/12

(6) Al-Umdah 2/83. Bahillani, Ijaz 156

(7) Al-Umdah 2/91



Ibn Munadir said to Khalaf al-Ahmar while they were at a party " . . . . Al-Nabighah, Imru' al-Qais and Zuhair even though they are dead their poetry became immortal.

Compare my poetry to theirs and judge between them with justice".<sup>(1)</sup> of the philologists and criticized it severely.

In another story Ibn Munadir himself urged Abu-Ubaidah to judge between his poetry and that of 'Adi Ibn Zaid. "Do not judge between the two times, judge between our poetry, and do not be fanatical".<sup>(2)</sup> strange words", al-Bakillani

Al-Buhturi was asked "who is better in poetry, Abu-Nuwas or Muslim"? He replied "Abu-Nuwas". The questioner said to him "indeed Tha'lab does not agree with you in this judgement".<sup>(2)</sup> Al-Buhturi said "this has nothing to do with Tha'lab and his colleagues who practise the study of poetry without composing it. Only those can know this who plumb the depth of poetry".<sup>(3)</sup> Judgement. Fanaticism makes

Al-Nashi' expressed his grief for that craft which had suffered great damage as a result of the demands of the philologists. he thing to you not in its proper form, it

"May God curse the craft of poetry, how we suffer as a result of the ignorance thereof.

They prefer that which is strange to that which is easy and clear to the hearer".<sup>(4)</sup> obscure unknown

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(1) Agh: 17/11. The story goes on that Khalaf was annoyed.

(1) He took a plate full of sauce and threw it at the poet.

(2) Agh: 17/12 on the margin of Itkan I

(3) Al-Umdah 2/83. Bakillani, Ijaz 156

(4) Al-Umdah 2/91



The poets after these efforts were able to regain their lost rights. Many critics proper became convinced that there were qualities in the Muwallads which should be acknowledged and admired. They, on the other hand, disagreed with the approach of the philologists and criticized it severely.

"I consider", al-Jahidh says, "that the purpose of the reciters and grammarians is only to collect old poetry which contains strange words which need explanation".<sup>(1)</sup> <sup>(1)</sup>

"Those who have chosen the strange words", al-Bakillani stated, "have done so for their own purpose, namely to explain what was difficult to others in order to show their own superiority in understanding it. Their purpose was not poetic excellence for its own sake".<sup>(2)</sup> <sup>(2)</sup>

Al-Jurjani warned his colleagues and readers to avoid fanaticism and asserted that "justice is the proper means by which to achieve a true judgement". Fanaticism makes impure the pure nature, blunts the sharpness of mind and clothes knowledge with doubt. When it becomes established it presents the thing to you not in its proper form, it stands between you and contemplation of the thing. It turns one aside from goodness which is apparent to the obscure unknown".<sup>(3)</sup> <sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Bayan; 3/196

(2) Ijaz; 157, on the margin of Itkan I

(3) Wasatah; 309



He went even further and claimed to show some errors in the production of the ancients which were held to be infallible. "Were it not for the fact that the people of Jahiliya were very ancient and that men believe them to be the pioneers, the leaders and the authorities, you would find much of their poetry defective and absurd, unworthy and unacceptable. But this notion of their beauty and belief in it has diverted criticism from them".<sup>(1)</sup> Al-Amidi held that "we know of none of the poets of the Jahiliya or of Islam who has escaped from criticism or from the fault finding of the Rawis".<sup>(2)</sup> Criticism is obvious. In another place he said "the Modern poets are not free from error and the poets of Islam are not safe from it. Many faults of non-conformity to the rules of prosody and the other varieties of faults occurred, for which no excuse can be made except by stretching a point".<sup>(3)</sup> Modern poetry found a proper and well deserved appreciation in Ibn Kotaiba's masterpiece "Ashshir Washshu'ara". He proclaimed their efficiency, reliability and dexterity, and disregarded the criteria of the philologists. "God did not restrict learning and poetry and rhetoric to a

(1) Wasatah; 12

(2) Al-Muwazanah; 20

(3) Ibid; 5/15. Al-Mudah; 1/133. Ibid; 3/171

(5) Kamil; 1/6



particular age nor appropriate them to a particular class, but has always distributed them in common among his servants, and has caused everything old to be new in its own day and every classic work to be an upstart at its first appearance<sup>(1)</sup>". He went on to emphasize his own method of judging the modern poets wherein he revealed for the first time the aesthetic criteria and urged the critics to avoid the chronological and philological methods. Al-Jahidh tacitly acknowledged the Moderns and subsequently gave them much consideration in his works. That Ibn Kotaibah influenced the later critics is obvious. Al-Mibarrid, though a grammarian, appears to have admired his suggestions and endeavoured to employ them. "It is not for his antiquity", he said, "that the poet should be preferred nor should he be scorned for his modernity<sup>(2)</sup>". Every one should be given what he deserved". Some of the unfamiliar Muwallads received considerable comment and appreciation because they produced, as he put it, "excellent poetry"<sup>(3)</sup>. Al-Jurjani made it clear that to acknowledge the Muwallads did not mean in any way that the critics had turned aside from the ancients. On the contrary, they tried to give

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(1) Ashshir; 5 cited by Nicholson:  *literary History of the Arabs* 77-78

(2) Kamil; 1/18. Al-Umdah; 1/133. Ikd; 3/171

(3) Kamil; 1/6



to every one his own due merit and to indicate the beauty of his work and the excellence of his contribution to literature. "It is not desirable that, when you see me praising a modern or mentioning the good qualities of a town dweller you should consider that I have turned aside from what is ancient or that you should attribute to me dislike of the Bedouins, but it is desirable that you should consider my purpose in having so acted and that you should investigate my object. Then you will be impartial in your judgement".<sup>(1)</sup>

confined their activity to a few questions, outstanding. It was in the beginning of the third century that a new direction was given to critical activities, a break with the past was made by the emergence of new conceptions in literature. Inspired as in the early days by religion, efforts were now made by the critics proper to apply the problems arising out of the Koran to literary purposes, with the result that a new approach to criticism was inaugurated. This involved a heightened conception of the value of literature and was in fact a phase in the development of critical theory full of significance - a phase which, in spite of its religious limitations, marked an entry to a new sphere of thought. It was successful in

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(1) Wasatah; 19. Only after Ibn Rashik's era were the critics convinced of the superiority of the Muwallads and announced it.



diverting criticism from the shallows of philology into a direct aesthetic approval. Earlier impulses in this direction had been of course religious, that is to say, critics originally busied themselves in discussing the stylistic virtues of the Koran. They now endeavoured to prove that its supernatural qualities, once thought to be religious, could also be regarded as literary. This point of view was maintained successfully although it created a great deal of controversy. (1)

In an endeavour to express their point of view the critics confined their activity to a few questions, outstanding among them: 1. "Wherein lies importance and beauty"? 2. "Is it to be sought in the word itself or in the ideas which are suggested by it"? 3. "Which of these two should be given the greater attention"? The discussion which arose out of these questions created a freer and more literary atmosphere, and consequently there arose a body of ideas which were of a more progressive and genuinely critical nature. The poets of the new movement were consequently no longer shackled. Their poetry came to be cultivated anew, as will be illustrated. The first to concern himself with such questions as these was al-Jahidh. Culture VII 1933. "I'jaz al-Koran". He was one of those who took part in the arguments



concerning the "I'jaz" or the miracle of the Koran. Although he was a well-known Mu'tazilite, he did not adopt the idea of al-Nadhdham, his real master, who asserted that there is nothing extraordinary in the style of the Koran, and that if the Arabs were left alone they could have composed pieces like it. They were, however, in his view deterred by God from attempting to rival it and in this lies the miracle. This is technically called (1) the argument of "Sarfah". (1) Al-Jahidh, however, emphasized in particular the point of style and wrote a book to prove his thesis. Unfortunately, his book was lost, and we are still unaware of the arguments he advanced or of the suggestions which he put forward to support his theory. We understand from (2) al-Suyuti that "al-Jahidh maintained that the miracle of (2) the Koran lay in its style and not in its contents. This theory was extended to other compositions, both poetry and prose. In so doing, al-Jahidh carried the question forth into the general field of literature and discussed very interesting points - points which contributed greatly to later studies. Indeed, they became the basis upon which the whole structure of later criticism was erected.

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(1) Islamic Culture VII 1933. "I'jaz al-Koran".

(2) Itkan, 2/117 - 118



In a discussion which seems to have been raised by one of his contemporaries he declared his theory in support of "words". "The master believed in the superiority of ideas, but ideas are thrown in the street, where every Bedouin and Persian can pick them up. The important thing is the correctness of metre, the choice of words, the ease of pronunciation, the increase of charm, health of nature and the dignity of the composition. Poetry is a craft, a kind of woven fabric or a sort of painting". Elsewhere he went on to state how men should choose "words". His ideas are of extreme purity and interest. "Just as words should not be low, vulgar and commonplace so they should not be strange and unusual, unless the speaker should happen to be a Bedouin. Only uncultured people understand uncultured language, and the jargon of the market place is only to be understood by its inhabitants". Al-Jahidh repeated this idea very often to emphasize what was called "adaptation of speech to situation", a tenet which figures largely in his theory. "It is a bad fault in a speaker to use the vocabulary of the Theologians in speech or letter or in addressing the common people and merchants or in speaking to his family or

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(1) Hayawan; 3/132

(2) Bayan; 1/80

(3) Hayawan; 3/366



his slaves. For every situation there are special words".<sup>(1)</sup>  
"If you use the inflections demanded by grammar in the conversation which is of a humorous and witty nature and belongs to the world of frivolous things, then the real significance of the conversation is entirely altered. If there is vulgarity in the words and if it is replaced by some thing dignified, the conversation, which was intended to amuse the people will make them sad".<sup>(2)</sup>  
"Every kind of conversation has its own words and for every kind of idea there are special words. Common words belong to vulgar ideas, light words to shallow and strong words to deep ideas".<sup>(3)</sup> "Every branch of literature has words which have been acquired by its writers after examination of others like them. These words, however, did not become suitable to their works until a relationship had been established between the words and the work in question".<sup>(4)</sup> In another place he says "every people have their favourite words and so also every branch of literature, every writer of prose and of poetry".<sup>(5)</sup> Al-Jahidh endeavoured not only to popularize his theory but also to apply it in detail. Both his books and in

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(1) Hayawan; 3/368. Sina'atain, 19 - 20

(2) Hayawan; 3/39

(3) Hayawan; 3/39, 6/8. Nakd al-Nathr; 80

(4) Hayawan; 3/368

(5) Hayawan; 3/366



"al-Hayawan", and "al-Bayan" give evidence of this. <sup>into</sup>  
He was the first and indeed the last critic who quoted the  
stories and conversations of the common people in their  
own words, and he never disdained to use vulgar words <sup>(1)</sup>  
while joking or telling the jokes of others. One could  
indeed consider him the first realist ever known to the  
Arabs. His method was almost unique, and was a natural  
reflection of his capability and simplicity. <sup>was rough and</sup>  
It is unfortunate that critics after al-Jahidh could not add  
any improvement or details to his theory. They came,  
however, to adopt it thoroughly and even at times repeated  
his words. Kudama seems to appreciate his suggestions  
about the use of vulgar and common language in witticism  
and to have acted accordingly. "There is a special place  
for absurd words, where none other than they must be used.  
It is in the telling of jokes and witticism and in the  
conversation of the common and vulgar people. If a man  
recounts them in a manner different to that in which they  
were spoken, they will be very wide of the meaning which  
they were intended to convey and they will be "lifeless to  
the hearer". <sup>(2)</sup> If he relates them as he heard them and in

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(1) Bayan; 1/81

(2) The Arabic is 'بردت عند مستحي'.

(2) Wasatah; 21

(3) Sin'at al-Hayat; 145

(4) Tabaqat; 48



the words in which they were spoken, they will fall into their own place and will reach the goal for which they were intended and the narrator will not be reproached for the use of these absurd words".<sup>(1)</sup>

Al-Jurjani treated the matter in his turn and inclined towards the finding of al-Jahidh. He made, however, one suggestion which is psychologically true. "The words of one become easy and the logic of another becomes rough and the reason for that lies in the difficulties of nature and character. For indeed simplicity of words follows simplicity of character and the charm of words is as much as that of the character . . . . you will find that apparent in the people of your time and you will see the coarse and uncultivated man using rough words, obscure speech and conversation until you might almost see his words in his face, in the sound and timbre of his voice and the form of his manners. It is the Bedouin nature which creates some of these characteristics".<sup>(2)</sup>

This statement reveals that al-Jurjani realized the relationship between the writer and his style, but he did not penetrate behind this primitive observation to a sufficient extent to enable him to enlarge upon and

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(1) Nakd al-Nathr; 120

(2) Wasatah; 21

(2) Sina'atain; 145

(3) Ibid, 42



systematize his new and indeed vital theory. Al-Askari was unable to add anything to the theory of al-Jahidh. Indeed, in many places of his "sina'atain" his suggestions showed that he was in two minds as to whether he should emphasize the importance of words or of ideas. Both these alternatives received considerable attention, and the fact that they entered into his consideration at all illustrates his dependence on al-Jahidh. This dependence does not cease with ideas for he not infrequently quotes al-Jahidh's words. (1)

"Masters of style need accuracy in words, because style depends upon the choice of words, and upon the accuracy of ideas". (2) "There is no virtue in words however well chosen if ideas which they expressed are absurd". (3)

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suggest a procedure by which one can acquire the ability to write. "The writer who seeks the mastery (1) See for instance Sina'atain (42) where he used the main statement of al-Jahidh to which he added a few lines only. "The importance is not in ideas because they are known to any Arab, Persian, villager and Bedouin. It is only in the perfection of the speech and its clarity, its beauty and its brilliance, its purity and correctness, its many shaded meanings and its vitality with the accuracy of its composition and its lack of fault in continuity. Nothing should be asked from meaning except that it should be right, but in words one should not be content with that only, but should conform to the qualities described above".

(2) Sina'atain; 145

(3) Ibid, 42



At this point, it should be noted how, as time passed on, the theory of al-Jahidh progressively influenced the critics until the time of al-Askari.<sup>(1)</sup> It is also worthy of notice that the emphasis on "words" and their importance, though theoretical rather than practical, embodied certain vital conclusions, outstanding among them being the recognition

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(1) The last critic who faced the question was Ibn Khaldun. His arguments showed his strict conformity to the ideas of al-Jahidh as did the arguments of many others.

"Ideas are common knowledge to everyone and they are within the capability of every mind to take from them what it wants and what pleases it, and there is no need for any effort. To express these ideas in words, however, requires effort". He went on to suggest a procedure by which one can acquire the ability to write. "The writer who seeks the mastery of speech in poetry or prose should only seek it in words, that is to say by committing to memory words like them from the speech of the Arabs in order to use them more freely and make them flow easily on his tongue, until he becomes fully proficient in the tongue of Mudhar and gets rid of foreign influence".

al-Mukaddimah; 577

See also: Ibn Sharaf al-Kairawani, A'lam al-Kalam, 28 where he clings to the same opinions, and Ibn Jinni, al-Khasai's 1/225 and 317, where in a long statement he justified the preference of words.

appeared. New customs and moral standards came into



of the every day language which was employed by some poets. It tended, however, to occupy the minds of the critics to the exclusion of the study of "ideas", and to bring about a weakening of interest in them. took place in all spheres of life and it is natural to expect that new trends in These new literary conceptions were not merely accidental. In almost all spheres influences from abroad impinged upon the life of the Arabs. These influences inevitably moulded moral, religious and literary standards. Under the Abbassids the Arabs were no longer considered superior to other races. They concealed their arrogance, sometimes willingly, sometimes perforce, and had to admit that the aliens, hitherto neglected, possessed much which was of value. Great attention was given to Greek philosophy and consequently translations of many important works were made. Persian influence prevailed in both administrative and social life.

The effect of the new culture and morals was obvious in that the Arabs, for the first time, came to admire them and to make a very great use of them.

Life was moulded accordingly, particularly in Baghdad where the new currents found appropriate channels.

Men, after a long period of fanaticism, came to be more tolerant. Many sects holding different religious views appeared. New customs and moral standards came into



existence. The drinking of wine, strictly prohibited by Islam, became public, and a looseness of sexual morality accompanied the wholesale transactions in captive girls. In fine, a formidable revolution took place in all spheres of life and it is natural to expect that new trends in literature should flourish and that new ideas should undermine its previously accepted traditions.

It is convenient at this point to proceed to study the Persian. Bashshar the first poet of whom we need speak was a Persian. He constantly boasted of his race and new trends in poetry with which we are concerned and the most influential poets who participated in the emancipation of poetic language.

"Oh you who question me earnestly in order to know me, I am generosity itself (the nose of generosity).

My roots have grown up among the generous men of

Banu Amir and my ancestors were the counterparts

of Koranish among the Persians".

Bashshar, though blind, studied the classical language and poetry. Moreover, he participated in more than one religious movement and argument in Basra. Abul-Yara; given explicit information about his activities and his religious ideas.

He was a poet of genius, excelling in every topic and showing remarkable talent in all fields. These qualities were emphasized by al-Jahish. "Bashshar was not a poet only but also a raja, a Sajja, a preacher . . . . .".

(1) To the latter point see: Agh: 3/156 (K)

(2) Agh: 186 (K); Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat: 1/255 (E.Y.)

(3) Bayan: 1/19. Al-Hamri: Zahr: 1/15. Agh: 3/24



According to many CHAPTER II he composed the greatest quantity of poetry ever known. On one occasion Bashshar

himself declared that he composed twelve thousand

(1) Poets and the Language. Ibn al-Kutaybi had seen one thousand pages of his poetry, a total of twelve thousand lines. (2)

Bashshar Ibn Bard. This great quantity was in general circulation in the days of Ibn Khallikan. (3) Unfortunately, very little of it has

Bashshar the first poet of whom we need speak was a Persian. He constantly boasted of his race and

occasionally poured his contempt on the Arabs.

"Oh you who question me earnestly in order to know me, I am generosity itself (the nose of generosity).

My roots have grown up among the generous men of Benu Amir and my ancestors were the counterparts of Koraish among the Persians".

Bashshar, though blind, studied the classical language and poetry. Moreover, he participated in more than one religious movement and argument in Basra. Abul-Faraj gives

copious information about his activities and his religious ideas. (2)

He was a poet of genius, excelling in every topic and showing remarkable talent in all fields. These qualities

were emphasized by al-Jahidh. "Bashshar was not a poet only but also a rajiz, a Sajja, a preacher . . . . .". (3)

(1) To the latter point see: Agh; 3/166 (K)

(2) Agh; 146 (K); Ibn Khallikan, Wafayat; 1/255 (E.V.)

(3) Bayan; 1/29. Al-Hasri; Zahr; 1/15. Agh; 3/24



According to many authorities he composed the greatest quantity of poetry ever known. On one occasion Bashshar himself declared that he had composed twelve thousand Kasida. <sup>(1)</sup> Ibn al-Nadim had seen one thousand pages of his poetry, a total of twenty thousand lines. <sup>(2)</sup> This great quantity was in general circulation in the days of Ibn Khallikan. <sup>(3)</sup> Unfortunately, very little of it has come to us - a fact which renders every study of him so difficult and inadequate. It is therefore necessary to consult the pronouncement of the old critics and to compare them with his surviving poetry. We are also unfortunate in that two works concerning not only Bashshar, but the Muwallads as a whole have been lost. They were: al-Bari' of Harun al-Munajjim (288) which covered the Muwallads from Bashshar to Ibn al-Zaiyat, <sup>(4)</sup> and "Akhbar al-Shu'ara" of "Ibn al-Marzubani" (284 or 287) which opened with Bashshar and closed with Ibn al-Mutazz. <sup>(5)</sup> His contemporaries shared largely with him. Bashshar trod a path which had never been trodden before and he excelled

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- (1) Agh; 3/144 (K).  
(2) Fihrist, 227  
(3) Wafayat (E. V.) 1/255  
(4) Yakut, Irsahd, 7/234  
(5) Fihrist; 190. Yakut, Irshad, 7/50



With Bashshar, we are told, new tendencies in poetry emerged and developed - tendencies which bore little resemblance to the traditional style. He willingly deserted the methods of the ancients and rejected the systems of the philologists, particularly with regard to the language of poetry. His discontent with their artificiality impelled him to develop a style of his own. Indeed, he possessed all the qualities necessary to ensure success and to achieve tangible results. Critics acknowledged his originality and talent, and nearly all of them thought highly of his poetry. Certain of their opinions showed clearly their awareness of his new ideas and methods which make him, to quote al-Tha'abibi, "The father of the Muwallads". Al-Asma'i was asked concerning Bashshar and Marwan, "which of them was the better poet"? He replied Bashshar . . . . because Marwan followed a way which many poets had followed and was unable to overtake those who had proceeded him and his contemporaries shared largely with him. Bashshar trod a path which had never been trodden before and he excelled in it and remained unique. He was more versatile, composed in various styles and was master of a wide field of rhetoric. Marwan, on the other hand, never surpassed



(1)  
the methods of the ancients". and his companions who added  
"Bashshar is the master of the Moderns, their moon, their  
(2)  
leader and the wonder of the world".  
"Bashshar was the most delicate of the Moderns in his style.  
He was called "the father of the Moderns" because he was  
the first to initiate the growth of ideas and he opened for  
them the path of innovation which they followed". (3)  
"They said the first of the Moderns to initiate the literary  
form of al-Badi<sup>1</sup> was Bashshar. . . . He was the last  
great poet of the Arabs whose poetry could be used as (4)  
evidence. Then came those who followed and imitated him".  
"Bashshar was one of the natural poets who practised (5)  
neither artificiality nor fanaticism in his poetry".  
"It was not fitting that Bashshar should dispute with  
Hammad about poetry because Hammad was in the low ground  
while Bashshar was in the highest star (Capella)". (6)

--- I was born here (in Basra) and I was brought up

- (1) Agh (K); 3/147 most eloquent of the Basm al-Kil.  
(2) Tha'alibi, Khas al-Khas; 84 would use a single faulty  
(3) Al-Marzubani, al-Muwashshah; 250  
(4) Bayan; 1/30. al-Umdah; 1/85 side, to which  
(5) Ashshir; 476 with admiration. At the end he  
(6) Hayawan; 4/453

(1) Al-Umdah; 2/285

(2) Agh (K); 3/149 - 150



" . . . . . Then came Bashshar and his companions who added ideas such as had never come to the mind of any poet of the Jahiliya. . . . . " (1)

These various judgements bear witness to the originality and great merit of Bashshar among the Muwallads. On the subject of language, he opposed the philologists constantly and refuted their arguments. This he did, not accidentally but as a deliberate policy. His knowledge of the classical language was doubtless equal to that of any philologist. (2)

It was once said to him "no single poet among the Arabs has composed anything in which there does not occur something which is objectionable to the Arabs from the point of view of words and which they regard as doubtful, but indeed there is nothing in your poetry which could give rise to doubt". He said "from where could the fault come"? "I was born here (in Basra) and I was brought up among eighty of the most eloquent of the Benu Akil.

There was not one among them who would use a single faulty word". (2)

Ukba Ibn Ru'ba al-Ajjaj once recited an ode, to which Bashshar was listening with admiration. At the end he

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(1) Al-Umdah; 2/185

(2) Agh (K); 3/149 - 150



addressed Bashshar in these words: "This is a type of poetry . . . . which you cannot compose". Bashshar replied, "do you dare say that to me"? "Indeed I am a better poet than you, your father and your grandfather".<sup>(1)</sup> He once composed an ode in which he used archaic words. Khalaf al-Ahmar and Khalaf Ibn Abi Amr asked him, "Why have you avoided your own style"? Bashshar replied, "I have heard that Salman Ibn Kotaibah (to whom he addressed the ode) boasted of his knowledge of language, and I used unusual words to puzzle him".<sup>(2)</sup> Bashshar showed a great simplicity of language, and this came naturally to him in most of his poetry. It is not suggested of course that his language is fully representative of the common speech of his age, but it bears characteristics of its own - characteristics which made his language unlike that of the Islamic poets let alone the Jahiliya's.<sup>(3)</sup> Indeed, he stuck the first nail in the coffin of the classical language. It was said to him "how did you excel your contemporaries and surpass the people of your era in beauty of poetical ideas and refinement of words?"

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(1) Bayan; 1/29. Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh; 7/116

(2) Agh (K); 3/190



He replied, "because I did not accept everything that my disposition brought to me and that my nature whispered to me . . . . I looked to the sources of talent, the mines of facts and the beautiful similes, then I approached them with good understanding and powerful instinct. conceive Hereafter I chose the best of them and built them together with a strong style<sup>(1)</sup>". This statement of Bashshar reflects his earnest enthusiasm and genuine desire to tread new paths in poetry. He never felt inferior to the one ode, philologists or grammarians who pointed to errors in his poetry.<sup>(2)</sup> He was the kind of man who possessed, besides his talent, the strength of a mature mind, fortified by a wonderful store of words and a retentive memory which he was able to bring instantly to bear on the subject in hand. Indeed, there is no better verse to illustrate the early in simplicity of his words than his:<sup>(3)</sup>

وشعر ليور الروض لودمت بينه بقول اذا ما احزن الشعر اسعد  
word address about, his slave girl.

The language of the old poets was mainly conditioned by two factors. One of these was the range of experience of the poets who had evolved the language to express it.

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(1) Al-Hasri; Zahr al-Adab; 1/150

(2) Agh (K); 3/210

(3) Agh; 3/23



The other was the literary tradition which had moulded the taste of many generations and was jealously guarded by the philologists. These two factors made any attempt to produce new forms of language somewhat hazardous. It was Bashshar who, despite these obstacles, came to conceive new ideas which caused him to break away from the traditional language. Furthermore, he abandoned the traditional form of the Kasida and created a more appropriate one. The number of subjects treated in one ode, which in the classical pattern had been almost unlimited, was reduced sometimes even to one. Most of his compositions treat of a single subject, which runs throughout the ode, whether it be long or short.<sup>(1)</sup> The argument of "ideas and words" emerged in its final form after Bashshar, but one can see its roots clearly in his poetry. He endeavoured on all occasions to adapt his words to his subject. To address Abdah, his slave girl, he employed some very primitive, if not absurd, ideas together with everyday language.

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(1) Look particularly, Agh; 3/28. 35. 41. 43. 256



The reader of his poetry can observe, without undue effort, the originality of its harmony and ideas.

He substituted the gardens, flowers and other things which are part of the urban life for the desert with its camels, gazelles, valleys and the like.

It is to be remarked here that Bashshar was not the first poet, in the strict sense of the term, to innovate in this way. Indeed, a few Umayyad poets had done so to a certain limited extent. But Bashshar differed from them in that these qualities permeated most of his works.

Bashshar's most attractive and genuine contributions to poetry are to be found in two spheres; his use of humour and al-Badi'. On him and they are afraid that someone may

"The older poets regarded witticism as a false note in  
(1)

poetry". By, he produced a good quantity of humorous poetry -

We hardly ever find this quality in classical poetry. who

(2)  
Seriousness was expected whatever the occasion. With

Bashshar this quality made an appearance for the first

time. He was a witty man who never abstained from a joke

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(1) Mez: The Renaissance (The English version); 256



Neither did he care if it happened to be vulgar. It is said that he heard a narrator in Basrah saying, "he who fasts the whole three months, namely: Rajab, Shaban, Ramadhan, God will build a huge castle in Paradise for him, whose hall will be thousand square parsangs in area and a thousand parsangs in height. Each door of its rooms and reception chambers will be ten square parsangs. Bashshar looked round at his guide and said "what a shocking place this would be in January".<sup>(1)</sup>

Another story runs that some men who were walking very quickly passed by him carrying a bier on the way to the cemetery. Bashshar said, "why are they in such a hurry? Have they stolen him and they are afraid that someone may chase them to kidnap him"? Certainly, he produced a good quantity of humorous poetry - a quantity which impressed Abu-Zaid, the philologist, who admired it above anything else.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Agh (K); 3/160

(2) Agh; 3/25



Similarly al-Asma'i acknowledged the uncomparable humour  
(1)  
of Bashshar.

Unfortunately that sort of his poetry which is still extant,  
shows but little of his humour. The few humorous odes  
which do exist suggest that the recovery of the lost odes  
would be a great gain.

These few odes, however, show clearly his ability to employ  
his humour in any sphere, political or social and with any  
class, high or low. Here are a few examples. Bashshar  
asked a friend to sell him some clothes on credit.

When his friend apologized for not having them, he composed  
these lines:

these lines: "Indeed, Abu-Zaid, committed adultery on  
the sacred night, and, as God almighty  
is my Lord, he does not observe the  
(2)  
sacredness of the month".

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(1) Agh; 3/25. "Bashshar mastered both serious and  
gay poetry.

(2) Agh (K); 3/188



Abu-Zaid seems to be as witty as Bashshar. When he received the letter, <sup>(1)</sup> so the story goes, he wrote on the back: story may be absurd, particularly to the Arabic hearer, but it reveals Abu-Zaid has got an excuse for so doing. In poetry, Bashshar's mother came to him when she was - the Persian on heat; he could not help making love to this mixture of her and serving her, and marvellous style was Muhammad Ibn al-Hajjaj said, "Bashshar once came to us looking very sad. 'What is the matter?' he asked, and he replied, 'You know that my donkey died some time ago. I saw him last night in a dream and I asked him 'why didn't you die?' 'Were you not happy with me?' His answer was these lines: 'Why should I adhere to a weaver who, when he says to me, 'Oh, my master take revenge, on my behalf, for an ass at the door of Al-Asbahani. It is the with her little finger she made me love-sick, and with her cheek she grieved me. She made me love-sick with her beautiful teeth on the day when we walked together. With coquetry and woman's wiles she weakened my body and emaciated me (exhausted me). She had a smooth cheek like that of al-

Shalfaran on the account of that I died.

(1) *Magh*, 3/64. Al-Masudi in *al-Muruj*, 7/205, attributed the ode to Abul-Abnana, one of the caliph al-Mutawakkil's bards.

(2) *Yakut* - *Irshad*, 7/224



Indeed, Bashshar Had I lived long passion for her would have  
(1)  
endured".

The story may be absurd, particularly to the Arabic hearer, but it reveals a new treatment and an entirely novel image in poetry. It is not the usual method but it is Bashshar's - the Persian.

This mixture of fictional stories and marvellous style was typically Persian. It was the greatest gift of Bashshar to poetry as an art. His humour coloured his satire and even at times his love. In satire particularly he exploited the physical and moral qualities of those against whom it was directed. Here are a few examples:

"Why should I adhere to a weaver who, when he comes and when he goes, has a neck like that of the ostrich of the desert. What is the matter between us, that you declare men unbelievers because they allege that that man with the neck like the ostrich is an unbeliever".  
(2)

ارفق بمرأز اما حركت نبسته فانه عربي من قوارير

xxxxxx

اصبت بول ذي الجلال وبعض مولى العريب فخذ بفضل فافخر

(1) Agh; 3/64. Al-Masudi in al-Muruj; 7/205, attributed the ode to Abul-Abannas, one of the Caliph Al-Mutawakhil bards.

(2) Yakut - Irshad; 7/224

(2) Kitab al-Badi' (Introduction); 10



Indeed, Bashshar has given us the modern conception of irony in an admirable way. He, with his brevity and sharpness, never ceased pouring his ridicule on the nobles and even on the Caliph himself. The following lines in mockery of the Caliph led to his death, and richness of life and its pomp "Sons of Umayyah, arise!!" Your sleep has the emergence of been long, and their employment abundantly in Bashshar's. In truth the Caliph is Y'akub son of Dawud, excessively. Your Caliph is missing, oh people, so look evidence of for the Caliph of God, twist the strings and (1) Critics class the flute". who employed al-Badia, and put The Badia - the other contribution of Bashshar - was already employed by the ancients. Examples of this style are met with in the Koran as well as in the Tradition and in the Bedouin language. The difference is only that in ancient times people did not abuse these figures, that they occurred occasionally, no more than once or twice, in a large poetical composition, but that nowadays this abuse has begun to transgress all limits, reaching its climax in (2) the poem of Abu-Lammam". Shar, as stated above, is Rhetorical figures can be put under two headings; figures of thought and figures of speech. In the classical era, poets seemed to employ the former which signifies the various methods of constructing sentences so as to give

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(1) Al-Fakhri (the English version); 180. Badaia' al-Badaiah; 1/33  
(2) Kitab al-Badia (Introduction); 10



the most effective expression to the thought of the poet. The pre-Islamic poets regarded figures of thought more than figures of speech. In other words they avoided the ornate style in favour of a plain one. Metaphor, simile, and other figures of speech indicate luxury and richness of life and its complexity. It is, however, natural to expect the emergence of these figures and their employment abundantly in Bashshar's time. He himself was the first to use them excessively. His surviving poetry does not bear much evidence of this - the greater of his poetry is lost.

Critics classified those who employed al-Badia, and put them in three classes:

(a) Bashshar - Ibn Harmah.

(b) Kulthum Ibn 'Amr - Mansur al-Numairi - Muslim - Abu-Nuwas.

(c) Abu-Tammam - al-Buhturi - Ibn al-M'utazz. (1)

This classification shows the superiority of Bashshar among the Muwallads in the point at issue.

The contribution of Bashshar, as stated above, is incomparable, and his great merit is undeniable in that he was the first to pave the way to modernity.

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(1) Al-Umdah; 1/85

Bayan; 1/30

(2) Ash; 7/3



(1)  
The later poets seem to have followed him and to have adopted his method rather than that of any critic. Each of his characteristics came to be developed by one of his adherents. Al-Sayyid and Abul-atahiya took over simplicity of words, and Abu-Tammam adopted al-Badia and gave it its final form.

(4)  
He committed to memory four hundred verses from her father's poetry in praise of 'Ali and his good leader. He added

that this poetry was limited to one type, namely: the

al-Sayyid al-Himyari  
Although his parents were Ubadhis, al-Sayyid secretly embraced Shi'ism. It is related that his parents determined to kill him when they knew of his religious allegiance. He, however, went to "Ukba Ibn Salim" of Basra and told him about this. Ukba put him under his protection and gave him a house in which he dwelt until his parents died, he then inherited from them. (1)

The copious information which is given by Abul-Faraj indicated that he was a fanatical Shi'i. He indulged in violent satire against the companions of the prophet and used even to insult them. This fact alone caused his poetry to be neglected. "Al-Sayyid's fame died and men deserted his poetry only because he was excessive in his vituperation against the companions of the prophet and



(1)  
his wives".  
Al-Asma'i said "were it not for his vituperation against  
the companions of the prophet I would never prefer any  
poet to him".  
(2)  
He composed a great quantity of poetry. (3) Ibn al-Mutazz  
said that "al-Sayyid had four daughters each of whom  
committed to memory four hundred odes from her father's  
poetry in praise of 'Ali and his good deeds". (4) He added  
that "his poetry was limited to one type, namely: the  
praise of 'Ali and his family. He never avoided or  
neglected a fact or an anecdote about him but included  
them all in his poetry". (5) Exaggeration is apparent, but  
he was a prolific poet. He possesses very little of it and  
this indeed does not show to any great extent his  
characteristics. Critics admired his method and thought  
highly of him. easily understand and appreciate.

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(1) Kutubi; Fawat; 1/24. Agh; 7/3 set out new canons.

(2) Agh; 7/4 solely his discontent with the classical

(3) Fawat; 1/24. Taha Husain; Hadith; 1/311 al-

(4) Tabakat al-Shu'ara; 8. A'yan al-Shia; 1/374

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Huart; Arabic. L. 87

(5) Tabakat al-Shu'ara; 6 - 7

(2) Agh; 7/3



Abu-<sup>3</sup>Uбайдah used to recite his poetry with admiration, Ibn Durayd considered him the best poet among the Muwallads, Al-<sup>2</sup>Utbi, in like manner, announced "there is no poet in our time whose style is better, or whose words are purer than al-Sayyid".<sup>(1)</sup> something which leads the mind astray".<sup>(1)</sup>

"Al-Sayyid has a style", said Abul-Paraj, "which can hardly be approached or attained".<sup>(2)</sup> There is another anecdote

What attracted these authorities was in particular his simplicity of language. He possessed a natural disposition towards usual words, and devoted his talent to the praise of <sup>3</sup>Alī, and to making the latter's fame more widely and generally known. of the princes' dislike of drinking."

As a propagandist, al-Sayyid could find no other way to achieve his purpose than the employment of everyday language. By its means he could convey to the people what they could easily understand and appreciate.

In this particular he differed from Bashshar. The latter aimed to establish a new school and to set out new canons. The motive was solely his discontent with the classical method. Yet in the simplicity of their language al-Sayyid and Bashshar are comparable.

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(1) Agh; 7/10

(2) Agh; 7/3



(1)  
It was said to al-Sayyid "why do you not employ in your poetry unusual words about which you might be asked as is the wont of the poets"? He replied, "to compose poetry near to the heart which delights the hearer is better than composing something which leads the mind astray".<sup>(1)</sup>

This new conception of the use of words is that of Bashshar put in the mouth of al-Sayyid. There is another anecdote which shows his dislike of unusual words and his conception of rhetoric.

"Abu-Bujair asked al-Sayyid who had become pale, "how was he?"

The latter replied, "I lack the drink to which I am accustomed because of the princes' dislike of drinking."

Bujair said, "drink and we will bear with you". Al-Sayyid

said, "I have not the wherewithal to drink". Bujair asked

his secretary to write a letter ordering al-Sayyid a

hundred bottles of "Maibakjtaj" - wine.

Al-Sayyid said, "this is no rhetoric". When Bujair asked,

"what is rhetoric", al-Sayyid replied, "that you should

bring to speech that which is necessary to it and leave out

never meet while her heart beats" -

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(1) Agh; 7/11

(1) Agh; 7/22



(1)  
what is superfluous".

He liberated his vocabulary and modelled his work on that of Bashshar alone. Since this was so, it is not surprising that many of his poems have considerable appeal to the Moderns.

Al-Sayyid's objects were not of the highest ethical order, but this is a fact which does not concern us here, for it is his language which we have to judge.

Three quotations may serve to convey not only his emancipation, but also the similarity of his language to that of a more modern era.

(a) *أنتنا نذف على بخله*  
*نذف من بنات الذي*  
*أهل الحرام من الكعبة*  
*نذف إلى ملك ما جد*  
*فدا اجتماع بها الوجهه*  
 (e) *أنتنا نذف على بخله*

"A Zubairit woman, a daughter of him who made lawful in the Ka'ba that which was forbidden, comes towards us on a mule to be wed and above her saddle is a litter. She is to be married to a king of generosity; would that they never meet while her heart beats".

(1) Agh; 7/22  
 that Ali Ibn Abi Talib has a natural disposition towards piety and goodness".

Al-Utbi commented "he did well . . . . this is poetry against the assault of which the heart has no barrier". (2)

(1) Agh; 7/13  
 (2) Agh; 7/20 - 11



(b) مجلس الى قوم فجعل ينشد هم الشعر وهم يلفظون فقال :  
لا يسمعون الى قول أجهل به وكيف تسنع الانعام للبشر  
أقول فاسلكوا إنس فأنطقوا قلت الضفادع بين الماء والشجر

"He was sitting among some men and began to recite to them poetry while they were inattentive and he said:-

"They do not listen to my poetry which I deliver, how should cattle listen to human beings!!

I say when they are quiet "men" and when they talk I say "they are frogs between the water and the trees".<sup>(1)</sup>

قال من قصيده  
(c) أقسم بالله وأرى والبر عما قال مسؤل  
إني علي بن أبي طالب على التقى والبر محبوب  
قال العتيبي : أحسن والله ... هذا هو الشعر الذي بهيم على القلب بغير حجاب .

Al-Sayyid said:-

"I swear by God and his pious ones, and indeed man shall be questioned about what he has said, that Ali Ibn Abi Talib has a natural disposition towards piety and goodness".<sup>1/237.</sup>

Al-Utbi commented "he did well . . . . this is poetry against the assault of which the heart has no barrier".<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Agh; 7/13

(2) Agh; 7/10 - 11



Abul-Ātahiya.

This natural ability to identify poetry with everyday speech yielded abundantly to reality throughout all his work. Yet other features were also present of which three

"Abul-Ātahiya was the son of a cupper in Kufa. In his early years he was immoral and led an immoral life. After that he sold crockery in Kufa. Subsequently he composed poetry and excelled in it. . . . He was a deep thinker and his ideas were pleasant, his words simple and his topics of great variety with a minimum of artificiality. In spite of that, however, much of his poetry was cheap".<sup>(1)</sup> People who visited him in his work-shop used to write down on potsherds the poems he recited.<sup>(2)</sup> His fondness for the common people influenced his conduct and gave him a bad name.<sup>(3)</sup> But he mastered their language fully and admired it. He was, however, a gifted man in the fullest sense of the word. Poetry to him meant no more than ordinary speech meant to others. which could have led to that desirable "Most men", he alleged, "speak poetry and they do not know it".<sup>(4)</sup> "They could be good poets if they developed the habit of composition". He himself could produce nothing in his speech but poetry.<sup>(5)</sup>

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(1) Ikd; 3/164. Maʾāhid al-Tansis; 1/237.

Shadarat; 2/26. Huart; Arabic. I. 74

(2) Agh; 3/129. Encyclopaedia of Islam; 1/79

(3) Diwan (Introduction); 5. Agh (K); 4/7

(4) Agh (K); 4/39

(5) Bayan; 1/64



This natural ability to identify poetry with everyday speech yielded abundantly and showed its reality throughout all his work. Yet other factors were also present of which three specially appear constantly throughout the poet's life and moulded the form of his poetry. The first was his early life and craftsmanship. ~~order to forget the misery.~~

Being a poor potter he naturally mixed with other poor of no social standing. Companions who must have struggled hard to obtain a livelihood and to secure the necessities of life in a community which despised every craft. (1)

It was not for the sake of their language alone that Abul-Atahiya maintained his interest in his early colleagues. It was rather because he belonged to them and not to any other class. Without exceptional gifts it would not have been possible to obtain a position among the aristocratic merchants or in any government body. He himself did not possess qualities which could have led to that desirable eventuality, but in the early part of his life these qualities were insufficiently matured. The environment of potters and others of a similar class was the formative influence upon qualities which later developed to full maturity. ~~They could not hear the hazy words of the classical poets.~~ This

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(1) Agh (K); 4/8



class of men were then, and indeed they are to-day, very poor. They enjoyed none of the comforts of life. The immense gap between them and the upper classes made them inferior and hopeless.

It is natural under such circumstances to seek for a remedy whatever it may be in order to forget the misery, and to seek some compensation for such an evil lot. The two extremes of libertinism and asceticism made immediate appeal. The motive in either instance is the same, though the means of expression are vastly different. Each is a revolt against life. The one, however, is attended by extreme optimism, while the other is the outcome of a nature basically pessimistic.

Abul-Atah'ja practised each of these extremes and suffered in full from the consequences of both. Lack of moderation in conduct and undisciplined excess in behaviour were doubtless the characteristics of his colleagues who have been called "the immoralists".

It appears likely that he composed poetry to be read or sung by them in al-Kufa. In such an environment it is natural to expect the everyday language to be the medium of conversation and composition.

They could not bear the harsh words of the classical poets



which were entirely unsuited to the prevailing atmosphere. We possess nowadays little data concerning the early compositions of the poet. Yet the surviving anecdotes of his early life indicate clearly his predilection for a simple style.<sup>(1)</sup>

The second factor which led to the simplicity of words was that of his passion for Otbah. Historians and critics give copious information concerning his love affair, but they seem to overlook its influence on his poetry.

It was in Baghdad that the poet met his sweetheart for the first time. A slave girl of the Caliph al-Mahdi, Otbah was the only one who caused him to suffer all of his life and as a result of that he "put on wool". To her he composed the best and most sincere part of his poetry. This was the main reason for his having used not only the sub-standard language but even slang. No matter what contemporaries might think of him, if Otbah alone could understand his deep grief and passionate love, then he was content. To those who constantly poured their blame upon him he addressed these lines:-

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(1) Agh; 3/137 - 6. 20/88. Ika; 3/164

(1) Muraj; 7/83



"Oh, vile people, you blame me very much. I wish

I have no patience with that, not even so much as the paring of a nail.

Yes, I loved greatly, has the day of judgement come? I will mount destruction to reach her whom I love".

To 'Utbah he devoted his poetry which embodied the warmest passion and love. His language was that which could be easily understood by his beloved.

(a)

"Ahmad asked me not knowing what I am suffering.

"Do you really love 'Utbah"?

I sighed and said, "indeed her love flows in all my veins". Would that I were dead, that I might rest, for indeed, I will grieve for her as long as I live. But I do not think that I have long to live, for he who has suffered as I have from the pangs of love, will not live long.

Say farewell to our friendship and say "may God have mercy upon a friend of ours who died of a broken heart".

I am her slave even though I cannot receive from her, praise be to God for her, emancipation". (1)



"Oh 'Otbah what happens to me and you. I wish I had not seen you. You possessed me; wound me as much as you wish to wound. I remain the whole night sleepless, and I contemplate the stars of the world. I make my bed the fire of tamarish, and my blanket is of thorns".

(1) Zahri 2/ "Say to her who is miserly with her love, and sears my heart with her neglect. "God tries my heart through you with nothing but the intensity of my devotion". Oh you who have stolen my wit, be not miserly but return it. I have naught of my love for you except that it takes me beyond its boundary".

"Say to her whom I will not name, "I redeem you with my father and my mother. You whom I redeem with my father, you have become the greatest of my sorrows". When my flesh melted with love, my people sought a doctor, but my knowledge of my complaint is sufficient

(1) Muruj: 7/84

(2) Agh (X); 4/97



He aspired I said to them" say to him who does not know  
this can what has affected me "love is my suffering".  
Historians Indeed, my soul is in Baghdad but my body is  
(1)  
and preferred in Kufa". In the court than to be under a  
Abul-Atahiya made his love for Utbah too obvious, with the  
result that he suffered greatly at the hand of her master  
al-mahdi. win his sympathy.

AL-ADAB

(1) Zahr/ 2/44 of Abul-Atahiyah. She, however, with the

(2) Al-Masudi in Muruj 6/234 related that "Utbah once  
complained to al-mahdi that Abul-Atahiya had been  
excessive in writing love poems about her. So he  
had him severely flogged. He came out having been  
flogged and Utbah met him while he was in that state  
and he said:

If you do to believe the story it is not difficult to  
understand the poet's subsequent behaviour. He came  
slain a man".

Her eyes filled with tears and she went in seeking  
al-Khaizuran, she was crying and her tears were welling  
up. She met al-mahdi in the chamber of al-Khaizuran  
and he said "what is the matter with Utbah that she is  
crying"? They said to him "she saw Abul-Atahiya after  
his flogging and she wept". . . . . The al-mahdi  
ordered for Abul-Atahiya fifty thousand dirhams which  
the latter scattered among those who were at the door.  
Al-Mahdi was informed of this and sent for Abul-  
Atahiya and asked him, "what made you give away my  
(1) present"? . . . . . he replied, "I do not eat the  
(2) price of one whom I love".



He aspired to a legitimate marriage with Otbah and sought this consummation many times. The poet in fact Historians stated, however, that she refused him entirely and preferred to live in the court than to be under a seller of earthen jars. After the death of al-Mahdi the poet resumed his quest with al-Rashid and was lucky first enough to win his sympathy. literature; he stands alone (1) The Caliph tried to make Otbah understand the sincerity and good will of Abul-Atahaja. She, however, with the tears running from her eyes begged the Caliph to keep (1) her in his harem. When the Caliph told Abul-Atahaja the whole story he, to quote his own words, "kept still a (2) while and then decided to wear the wool". Similar to the If one is to believe the story it is not difficult to understand the poet's subsequent behaviour. He came by to the conclusion that life was hopeless and that he (2) could no longer enjoy it. It was a reaction against this own self and against his community; both were unable to fulfil his desire. Then another stage of the poet's life and indeed a very important one emerged. Henceforth he produced poetry in a mode which represented one aspect of Sufiism.

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(1) Muruj; 6/334 - 335 literature; 76

(2) Kamil; 2/11. Muruj; 6/336 (English version); 171 - 172



Sufiis, as is known, have their "noble path" with manifold degrees and stations of perfection. The poet in fact adopted that way of life which was nothing more or less than the way of Sufiis; contempt of this life, and a devotion to the eternal.

Prof. Oestrup has assumed that Abul-Atahya was "the first philosophical poet in Arabic literature; he stands alone, unfortunately, in the independence of the form he chose". (1)

As far as philosophy is concerned, one may doubt this statement. Goldziher's chapter entitled "asceticism and Sufiism" proves the deep influence of Buddhism on the Muslim ideas of life in the second century. In Abul-Atahya's poetry we find much which is similar to the instructions of Buddha. It is therefore more likely that the poet who was rightly called "Zahid" was influenced by the adherents of Buddha, and found great relief in following their practice. (2) It would, however, be too much to equate the poet with philosophers.

His adoption of Sufiism, at this stage of life, further assisted him in the use of simple language. Here is a story which sets forth his views on this subject.

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(1) Encyclopaedia of Islam; 1/79  
Huart; Arabic Literature; 76

(2) Muhammad and Islam (English version); 171 - 172



"Ibn Abil-Abyadh said to Abul-Atahiya: I compose on asceticism in which I have already produced much poetry. It is a method of which I think well and I hope I do not make mistakes in it. I have heard your poetry on this theme and I wish to hear more of it, if you are willing to recite to me some of your best odes".

Abul-Atahiya said, "I would like you to know that what I have composed was bad. . . . because poetry should be as good as that of the old masters or as that of Bashshar . . . . and if not the best way is to use words which are not obscure to the general public, as it is my custom especially in reference to asceticism".  
"Asceticism is not the way of kings nor of lawis nor philologists.

It is, however, beloved of ascetics, traditionists, juriconsults, and the common people, and that which they admire most is that which they understand<sup>(1)</sup>".

Abul-Atahiya once recited verses in "al-Zuhd" to Salm al-Khasir. "Death embitters all the joys of life".

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(1) Agh; 3/161.

He said: "This is simple speech and traces. There is nothing out of place in it nor anything lacking."

He also said: "The soul accepts it".<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Agh; 3/161.

(2) Agh; 3/130



"Oh my people how swift is death!!

Oh wonder! if a man dies, his beloved forgets him and neglects him.

Indeed, grey hair is to the son of Adam the announcer of death. It appears upon his

In his unique temple and announces his death. He who is puzzled most desires and is preoccupied with his longing, about him. A death will take him before he attains his aim but always with desire. and recognition of his high

Or when he said to Salma "what do you think of them?" Salma said "they are excellent but their words are those of the marketplace". Abul-Atahiyat replied "by God, it is alone (1) makes me favour them which causes you to dislike them".

Or this way of the poet seems to have attracted most of the literate who admired his simplicity in particular. A. N. S. Ibn Abdullah maintained that "Abul-Atahiyat was the best living poet and he earned this reputation by the following lines from 'al-Zuhd': dissatisfaction.

We may here see it was suspended in great hopes, the what hopes. Al-Jarjani (301/ah) to the world full of zest, to the what zest. the Moderns to Oh man, prepare yourself to depart, from your this resulted people and your wealth, for death himself boasted of this inevitable, come what may".

Mus'ab said "this is simple speech and true. There is (1) nothing out of place in it nor anything lacking.

(2) The wise man knows it and the fool accepts it".



Abu-Tammam.

In his unique and indeed peculiar composition, Abu-Tammam, puzzled most of the old critics. They could not agree about him. Al-Amidi (371/981) frequently criticized him but always with respect, and recognition of his high qualities. Al-Suli (335/946), on the other hand, devoted his work "Akhbar Abi Tammam" to maintaining and to proving his superior qualities - qualities which according to him, made the poet outstanding in his composition. Other critics differed, in like manner, in their opinions. It is to be emphasized that in spite of the earnest attempt of the critics to judge the poet objectively their partiality is apparent. Some of them were unable to conceal their discontent and dissatisfaction.

We may here state some of these judgements on the poet.

Al-Jurjani (309/1001) alleged that "Abu-Tammam tried among the Moderns to imitate the words of the ancients, and from this resulted the harshness of his words. He himself boasted of this in many of his verses:

"They are (words) demons in the ears and  
(1)  
stars to the heart".



"He was artificial and exaggerated in the use of difficult words as much as he could. He was, however, not satisfied with that but, in addition, he made use of al-Badi'. He introduced it from all sides and approached it by all means. Not content with these two shortcomings he brought in obscure ideas and sought tortuous words. His poetry when it struck the ear, only reached the heart after tiring the mind, and fatiguing the soul".<sup>(1)</sup> the jurist who weighs his words and is Al-Amidi, on the contrary, "found no connection between his poetry and that of the ancients.<sup>(2)</sup> "It did not resemble that of the ancients and was not in their style because it contained far-fetched allegories and new ideas".<sup>(2)</sup> He arrives at This new style which al-Amidi maintained was practised at first by Muslim Ibn al-Wabid, was merely corruption.<sup>(3)</sup> On the other hand, it was alien to the familiar methods of the Arabs.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Wasatah; 22 - 23

(2) al-Muwazanah; 2 - 3

(3) al-Muwazanah; 49



Ibn Rashik (456 - 1063) quoted the view of various authorities all of which contained similar contradiction. Ibn al-Rumi, for instance, on one occasion alleged that "al-Ta'i would seek the idea without regard to the word. (1) If an aramaic word could convey his idea he would use it". Another authority held that Habib (Abu-Tammam) "was like the just judge who utters every word in its fitting place after long consideration, and research into evidence, or he was like the jurisconsult who weighs his words and is (2) circumspect out of consideration for his religion". Ibn Rashik himself seems to have followed al-Jurjani and to have been convinced that "Habib turns, whether he will or not, to obscurities of speech, and that which troubles the ears together with artificiality. He arrives at ideas by devious routes, seeks them with effort, and takes (3) hold of them with strength (brings out the meaning forcibly) (3) ~~utterance as it seems. Abu-Tammam was the most celebrated~~

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(1) al-Umdah; 1/86

(2) Ibid; 1/87

(3) Ibid; 1/85

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(1) Ijaz; 53

(2) Khizanah; 1/323



While the above mentioned authorities maintained that the obscurity of Abu-Tammam's poetry was due mainly to his fondness for producing new ideas in addition to his research after unusual words, al-Bakillani (403/1012) has stressed al-Badi' and claimed it to be the major reason for the difficulties inherent in his style.

" . . . . . This and the like (he means obscurity) occurs through his excessive artificiality until it blinds him to the right way. He would exceed the proper bounds in employing antithesis, paranomasia, and other rhetorical figures such as metaphor and the like, until his poetry became tedious and his composition unhealthy".<sup>(1)</sup>

Indeed, one could expect rather more controversy regarding the poet simply because he had peculiarities of his own, and followed methods quite unlike the ancients and even some of his contemporaries.

Strange as it seems, Abu-Tammam was the most celebrated authority on Arabic poetry. He, we are told, memorised about fourteen thousand "urjuzah" in addition to innumerable odes.<sup>(2)</sup> Although he is best known by his

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(1) Ijaz; 53

(2) Khizanah; 1/323



anthology "al-Hamasah", he also composed, in addition to his Diwan, other works which did not attain the same reputation.<sup>(1)</sup>

Al-Hasan Ibn Raja' said, "I have not seen any man who has a sounder knowledge of good poetry both ancient and modern than Abu-Tammam".<sup>(2)</sup>

A poet most familiar with the old and new poetry, is expected at least unconsciously, to be influenced by its style. But one might try in vain to find such an influence present in Abu-Tammam. He endeavoured to study the poetry of the Arabs with close scrutiny in the order to prepare for a revolt against it. Critics, as has been stated, were unable either to appreciate his poetry or to produce adequate criticism of it.

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(1) Al-Amidi mentioned the following works (Muwazanah; 23)

(a) Al-Ikhtiyar al-Kaba'ili al-Akbar.

(b) Ikhtiyar Shu'ara al-Fuhul.

(c) Ikhtiyar al-Mukatta'at.

(d) Ikhtiyar Ash'ar al-Muhdathin.

(e) al-Hamasah.

(2) Sul1, Akhbar; 118

(1) al-Muwazanah; 9

(2) Ibid; 55



Some of the traditionalists contented themselves with dismissing him completely. Ibn al-Arabi once said of him "if this composition could be called poetry, then what the Arabs have composed is altogether rubbish".<sup>(1)</sup> Ibn al-'Ala' al-Sajistani found no originality in Abu-Tammam's poetry whatsoever.<sup>(2)</sup>

Al-Badia<sup>3</sup> was held to be the main reason for his ambiguity and consequently the focus of the critics' dissatisfaction. This is, however, only partially true. It requires amplification if we are to avoid the same mistake as the critics themselves made. If we are to accept the critics' opinion regarding al-Badia<sup>3</sup>, then all poets who employed it are equally worthy of disapprobation. This is obviously not tenable. We meet with excellent odes and expressive figures of great appeal in the work of "Muslim" who was considered to be the first to employ al-Badia<sup>3</sup> to excess. It is not merely the employment of al-Badia<sup>3</sup> which corrupted and consequently caused the ambiguities, as the critics would have us to believe, but it is the manner of employing it.

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(1) al-Muwazanah; 9

(2) Ibid; 55



With Abu-Tammam most of his rhetorical figures were used to suggest new conceptions of much complexity. Indeed, with the exception of a few fragments, his language is straightforward and intelligible. It is in fact no less simple than the language of Bashshar and his followers. But the ideas, the images and the mode of expression were shaped in a completely new form. Many of the poet's figures reveal a deliberate attempt to oust the traditional usage and to insert others. Critics failed to understand this fact and consequently attempted to apply rules which were no longer relevant. They were so pre-occupied with deciding whether or not Abu-Tammam conformed to their rules, that they quite failed to recognize the motives which prompted the poet's reaction against them. Had they examined the intention of the poet, they might have arrived at more satisfactory conclusions. Indeed, had such been the case, it would have settled not only the question of Abu-Tammam but also that of the Muwallads. In this they conformed. The continuous biting criticism might have given way before a growing ability to appreciate the beauty of the new methods. Four things seem to have caused the whole trouble, and to Tammam wanted them to be drawn. No matter to him whether his picture happened to be clumsy or neat so long as he



havelled to the ambiguity in Abu-Tammam's poetry. They are: The personification of inanimate things; the juxtaposition of opposites, the employment of technical terms which are alien to poetry, and in like manner, the use of the premises and conclusions of the logicians. seemed irrelevant and far-fetched to the older school.

The personification of inanimate things. normal practice among the Arabs. But the addition of Critics maintained that Abu-Tammam's language was harsh and unusual - an assumption which is in no way acceptable. It is a fact that one can understand every single word in many of the odes and yet be quite unable to understand the meaning of the whole. Thus it is not the choice of individual words which is to blame, but rather the use of al-Badi' as the poet applied it.

Rhetorical figures in the case of the ancients were uniformly simple and intelligible. Simile, metaphor, metonymy and the like were introduced sparingly and they occurred without artificiality. In this they conformed to the familiar taste of the Arabs.

With Abu-Tammam other forms came into existence. Rhetorical figures were not used in the manner of the ancients. They simply sought to form pictures as Abu-Tammam wanted them to be drawn. No matter to him whether his picture happened to be clumsy or neat so long as he



himself was satisfied. Indeed, most of his pictures did not appeal to the common taste, neither could they be appreciated without a great deal of effort and contemplation. He, unlike the ancients, came to personify inanimate things and consequently attributed to them qualities which seemed irrelevant and far-fetched to the older school. To explain the invisible by means of the visible was a normal practice among the Arabs. But the addition of peculiar qualities to the invisible or inanimate was a new departure. Here are a few examples of Abu-Tammam's method in this particular.

"He did not die until the blade of his sword  
died from the blows, and the spears were  
sad for him.

He put his feet in the pool of death and  
said to them "resurrection is under you ~  
instep". He attacked and security and  
hope were the web of his garment, but he  
did not come back until the the shroud he  
was his reward.

He wore the red clothes of death and before  
the night darkened they became the green  
silk of Paradise".



"(He is) like the rain which falls freely, and  
the barren land asked the help of it.

If a stretch of land could strive to express  
its gratitude for favour, then the barren land  
would turn towards the rain. It for you have

Its heavy downpour is pleasant and fresh.

If hearts were able to stand (if hearts were  
capable of independent action) they would  
surely embrace it.

It is water which flows and water follows it  
and water-courses are made while others  
disappear and neglect.

The fertile land unveils its face (head) and  
barrenness disappears from it as a criminal  
disappears".

mounted him from her back after  
he had set his feet firmly in the stirrup".

"By my life you have brought his heart near  
to the rope of the spear that seeks the  
water (of his life).

The bottom (of the well of his life) was  
formerly deep to one who would draw its water

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(1) Ibid; 57 - 58

(2) Ibid; 224

(3) Ibid; 57

(4) Ibid; 354



of this technique and now you have made it accessible. Its  
form of antithesis water may be drunk by hand<sup>(1)</sup>. the direct

contrast of words, but of images. played a large role in the

expression "I only acquired an accumulation of property

"Eat a new patience and drink it for you have

caused to rise the camel of tyranny which

was couchant<sup>(2)</sup>". means of broken sleep<sup>(1)</sup>.

(2) "The beautiful girls of the district have gone,

deserting you, oft are they clothed in

distance and neglect<sup>(3)</sup>".

(3) "Destiny dismounted him from her back after  
he had set his feet firmly in the stirrup<sup>(4)</sup>".

The juxtaposition of opposites.

To produce contrasting words in the verse is called,  
technically "antithesis". Abu-Tammam made excessive use

(1) Diwan; 102

(2) Ibid; 224

(3) Ibid; 87

(4) Ibid; 354

(5) Ibid; 260



of this technique. He also introduced another complicated form of antithesis. His medium was not the direct contrast of words, but of images. (1)

"I only acquired an accumulation of property with which I was happy in my wandering state. The days gave me no quiet sleep which I could enjoy except by means of broken sleep". (1)

(2) مفرق ذوب الصبغة وبعده محو يار من النضارة يطر

(2) but nevertheless, it is called the essence of things".

"The origin of the idea", al-Tiberizi said, "is that Jahm refused to attach any name to God and he believed that a name only applied to essence and accident.

(3) كان قد عرس عورة ونظال  
 تلك ذريجان احتيال بعدا  
 سبت ونهنا على استسباها ما هو كامن نظرة وجمال  
 But because of its great effect it is called the essence of things. For it is named and unnamed at one and the same time.

The technical terms.

These occur infrequently in the Diwan. Nevertheless, they caused no little perplexity. The use of such terms reflects the poet's scholarship. Hewas indeed not the

(1) Diwan; 100

(2) Ibid; 157

(3) Ibid; 260



first to introduce them into poetry. Abu-Nuwas before him used such technique sparingly. (1) He rejects (the Abu-Tammam differed in that he employed terms which need comprehensive background in order to be understood. Two examples may be sufficient to illustrate this point.

(2) جَمِيَّةُ الْوَصَافِ إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ لَقَّبُوا بِجَوْهَرِ الْأَشْيَاءِ  
his generosity and liberality he follows the way of Jahm. (1)

"It is Jahmiyah, that is to say it has no name but nevertheless, it is called the essence of things".

This method, like the previous one, occurred occasionally. "The origin of the idea", al-Tibrizi said, "is that Jahm refused to attach any name to God and he believed that a name only applied to essence and accident. (2) Abu-Tammam says "This wine is so delicate that it almost ceased to be either accident or essence or to have a name. But because of its great effect it is called the essence of things. (3) For it is named and unnamed at one and the same time".

(4) عَرَبِيٌّ عَظِيمُ الدِّينِ جَبَرِيٌّ الْكَوْنِ يَنْفِي الْقَوَى وَيُبْقِي التَّطْيِيفَ  
garden of the high hills, once green, dries before the desert. (3)

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- (1) Bayan; 1/108 78  
(2) Diwan; 3  
(3) Tibrizi (MS); 2/268  
(4) Diwan; 208



"He is like Amr in the strength of his religion and like Jahm in his heresy. He rejects (the doctrine of man's) free will and takes his stand upon obligation.

That is to say he is in his behaviour and his chastity like Amr and follows his way. In his generosity and liberality he follows the way of Jahm".<sup>(1)</sup>

The premises and conclusions of the logicians.

This method, like the previous one, occurred occasionally in his poetry and was handled in a masterly fashion.

"Do not despise him for the wrinkles (of age),<sup>(2)</sup> grounds that for the sword is not scorned if it is scored".

which the ancients had achieved. appreciation of poetry, according to the traditionalists,

is not admitted. "The vicissitude of time can give misfortune thought but as a gift to those of noble birth. Thus the

imitation of garden of the high hills, once green, dries<sup>(3)</sup> up before the garden of the desert".

Later poets who conformed to this requirement gained the

approval of the critics to a degree which was often out of

all relation to their true merit. The domination of

philologists in the realm of literature came, in the course

(1) Tibrizi (MS); 2/268

(2) Diwan; 15

(3) Ibid; 353



Summary.

The period which elapsed between the beginning of the Koranic exegesis by Ibn Abbas and the appearance of the Bashshar witnessed the development of conservatism in all its stages even to the beginnings of its decline. The activities of the interpreters and philologists were concentrated on defending the Koran and on proving the absolute purity of its language. This desire led them to the study of the old poetry in order that it might be made to serve their purpose and uphold their theories. Poets were accordingly classified and two classes gained particular favour. Later poets were rejected on the grounds that they could not attain that purity of language which the ancients had achieved. Appreciation of poetry, according to the traditionalists, is not admiration for the nobility, grandeur or beauty of thought but rather a mere examination of language. Imitation of the old language was demanded and highly admired. Later poets who conformed to this requirement gained the approval of the critics to a degree which was often out of all relation to their true merit. The domination of philologists in the realm of literature came, in the course



of time, to be so absolute that they were able to dismiss out of hand all which conflicted with their pre-conceived ideas. It was al-Parazdak who struck the first and most courageous blow against the grammarians. Indeed, his efforts initiated the movement which eventually led to the emancipation of poetry. The dispute reached its culmination with Bashshar the Persian. It was he who first broke away from traditionism and introduced a new form of composition. His motto was modernity and liberty, a principle which he strove to follow in spite of the obstacles put in his way. Such behaviour aroused almost unsurmountable difficulties. It was not only necessary to avoid the conventional language and usages of poetry but also to ensure that his methods maintained the necessary literary standards. Indeed, Bashshar in undertaking the task demonstrates both his moral courage and his progressiveness. It was these virtues which especially distinguished him from the rest of the Muwallads. What is more striking, and less often appreciated, is the fact that he drew his subject matter from many diverse walks of life, out of many and varied sensuous experiences. Bashshar discovered, and was always conscious, that poetry is an art and not a repository of obsolete words and ideas. He began to be aware of words aesthetically, as an artistic medium by means of which beauty of form can be revealed to



the listener. This realization gave rise to the vivid imagery, simple words and witticism, which came to form the major element in the modern style. This phenomenon was not a mere accident in Bashshar. It was, one may surmise, the result of the flourishing civilization of Baghdad which had absorbed Greek philosophy together with much of the Persian manner of life. Bashshar, like so many Muwallads, came into close contact with these new currents of life and tended to admire their results. All this, was in fact the intellectual and literary aspect of a large movement which strove to liberate life in all its aspects, from the trammels of the past. Its exponents were mostly of non-Arab blood, and the result was an inevitable controversy between the Arabs and the non-Arabs. This dispute was less manifest in poetry than in theology and rhetoric. Many critics proper came to participate in the new tendency and to find it worthy of admiration. It was from the poets that this new movement first emanated. The influence which Bashshar and his colleagues had upon the critics was a powerful factor in bringing about their change of attitude. The question of words and opinions, for instance, though it originated among the theologians, found its way into literature.



The whole controversy then came within the sphere of influence of Bashshar and others of his school. Their revolutionary ideas impinging upon the minds of the critics, caused them to modify their attitude. The argument now turned not upon the traditional standards, but upon those produced by the new school. Al-Jahidh who made much in his writings of this particular question maintained that "poetry is not made with ideas but is made of words". It is obvious that words occupied, in his opinion, the first place - a fact which should have led him to follow the line of the philologists who, as will be remembered, had insisted upon the necessity of imitating slavishly, the words and usages of classical models. This, al-Jahidh and other critics did not do. What they meant by the phrase "poetry is not made with ideas but is made of words" was that poetry is the art of verbal expression and not primarily a vehicle of thought. The vocabulary which formed the instrument of this "verbal expression" was drawn from that of the pre-Islamic poets did not concern them. They were thus emphasizing form at the expense of content. In practice, however, they were not so rigid and came to emphasize the importance of contents, circumstances and potential audiences. Al-Jahidh stressed that to address



the Suka - common people - you have to use common words, and that to address kings you have to employ words of appropriate dignity.

These opinions were employed by Bashshar who successfully adapted himself to his audience and environment.

Witticism and common language were no longer regarded as defects by the critics, and these were qualities which flourished in Bashshar's school.

The other point is that the Muwallads relied on the senses to enrich their compositions. Their awareness of sensuous experience and their aesthetic acuteness enabled them to seize on the essential characteristics of things and events. These qualities were the new raw material of their poetry.

Abul-Atahūja's love, al-Sayyid's propoganda and Abu-Tamman's desire to create a new ideal in al-Badiā were the major stimuli.

Critics, as we have seen, no longer made efforts to oppose what the poets produced. They nearly always like al-Jahidh and Kudama endeavoured to formulate their rules in accordance with the works of the poets. In the meantime, they criticised the methods and proved the partiality and prejudice of the old philologists.

Hence, the poets who had once followed the critics, now took the lead. Instead of being compelled to confine



their poetry within the limits of the critics' standards, the poets became the arbiters of these standards. Critics lost the power to influence the Moderns. They confined themselves to reiterating their praise. Al-Jahidh once commented on this single verse of Abul-Atahūya: "Oh (vigorous) youth, joyous and coveted, the scent of paradise is in youth". "Indeed, it conveys the idea of delight which nothing other than the heart can understand. Tongues are only able to express after long and continuous thought". "The best ideas", he added "are those which the mind can accept more quickly than the tongue can describe".<sup>(1)</sup> Al-Asma'i acclaimed al-Sayyid as the best poet.<sup>(2)</sup>

Many instances show the esteem in which Abul-Atahūya and Abu-Tammam were held.

The new tendency spread rapidly. New poets became the ideal of their generation. Indeed, there is no better evidence to support this fact than this statement made by Abul-Faraj. "Najm al-Nattah said "I recall my last time in ~~at~~-Basra. There was neither lover nor mistress who did not recite the poetry of Bashshar, nor

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(1) Agh (K); 4/36

(2) Agh; 7/74



professional mourner, nor singing girl who did not earn a living by it, nor was there any noble man who did not fear it"<sup>(1)</sup>.

It is to be emphasized that this era from Bashshar to ~~IBN AL-MUTAZZ~~ represented a genuine evolution and progress of poetry. A relapse came to destroy this movement later or at least to weaken it and lessen its zest. Poets again began to look back to the Islamees and frequently to the Jahilees.

Thus, poetry entered once more a period of neo-classicism which was for many centuries, to deprive it of any real spontaneity, and which put an end to the new-found glory of the Muwallads.

<sup>(1)</sup>  
The "Kasida" the standard type of the finished poem was treated from many points of view, such as the outward form, contents and "rhyme and metre".

As for the outward form the Kasida as Krenkow put it is "a very artificial composition, the same rhyme has to run through the whole of the verses, however long the poem may be". There is no determinate number of lines, inasmuch that it sometimes exceeds a hundred but is seldom

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For the original meaning of the word see:

(1) Agh (K); 3/149



(1)  
less than ten. It is bound by a metre which the poet  
has to guard CHAPTER III. throughout the whole course.  
If the poet shows his metre in a single case, as  
al-Jahidh stated, this poetry will be adversely  
criticised. Critics and contents of poetry.

From al-Jahidh to Ibn Rashik the study of the ode was  
comprehensive indeed, and at one time showed an inclination  
to set out laws for the several species.  
Fortunately, this task unlike that of the study of language,  
was generally undertaken by men of a literary disposition  
who attempted to lay down principles of their own largely  
unaffected by those of the grammarians and philologists.  
(1)  
The "Kasida" the standard type of the finished poem was  
treated from many points of view, such as the outward form,  
contents and "rhyme and metre".

As for the outward form the Kasida as Krenkow put it is  
"a very artificial composition, the same rhyme has to run  
through the whole of the verses, however long the poem  
may be". There is no determinate number of lines,  
insomuch that it sometimes exceeds a hundred but is seldom

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(1) For the original meaning of the word see:

(2) Lisan; 4/354

(3) Encyclopaedia of Islam; 2/796; 3/163



(1)  
less than ten. It is bound by a metre which the poet has to guard most scrupulously throughout the whole course. "If the poet alters his metre in a single ode", what comes al-Bakillani stated, "his poetry will be adversely (2) criticized".

(2)  
concern to this rule to be faulty except in admiration for unity of rhyme and metre rendered the prolongation of any one theme beyond a certain point practically impossible. Poets accordingly showed a distinct tendency to deal with various subjects within one single ode. (1) merely that the poet who wishes to. The construction of the "Kasida" is another factor which enables the poet to deal with a great variety of subjects; every verse is a unity, independent in itself and frequently entirely independent of what went before it and what comes after it. It is a shortcoming in poetry if the words of one verse are connected grammatically with those of the next and this shortcoming is known as

(3)  
"Tadhmin", nevertheless it was common. (2) Ibn Rashik opposed men who do not admit the importance of

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(1) "If the poem counts seven verses it is called "ode" although some authorities prefer it to be ten and

(1) onward". Al-Umdah; 1/125

(2) I'jaz; 94/171

(3) Abul-Ala'; al-Fusul; 35. Ikā; 3/165



this construction. "Some men prefer the different parts of the poem to be interdependent but I prefer that each verse should stand alone not being dependent on what comes before or what comes after it and I consider any thing which does not conform to this rule to be faulty except in certain well known instances such as stories and the like; in this case the dependence of one part on the other is desirable from the point of view of narrative".<sup>(1)</sup> the brief  
It is not meant by this that every verse should take on<sup>(1)</sup> a fresh idea but merely that the poet who wishes to switch from one idea to another should realise that the nature of poetry assists him greatly in so doing. The poet, on the other hand, should be on his guard against any tendency to make the connection between verses weak or loose, a defect which may easily occur in such a style. Al-Jahidh made it clear that "the most perfect poetry is that which you recognize as having continuity in its parts and which is easy to recite, by which facts you know that it has been composed as one single whole and in one style".<sup>(2)</sup>  
Al-Hatimi said: "a Kasida is like a man in the connection of one of his limbs to the other. When one is separated

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(1) Al-Umdah; 1/175

(2) Ibid; 1/171



from the other and the harmony of the composition is destroyed it leaves the body disfigured and spoils its beauty . . . . . I have found the masters of the ancients and the experts in the craft from among the Muwallads very much on guard in circumstances such as these in order to make the Kasida, in the harmony of its first and last hemistiches and the relationship of its amatory prelude and its panegyric like the eloquent epistle and the brief speech. No part of it can be separated from the other<sup>(1)</sup>. The several subjects of the ode generally follow one another in a stable succession, that is to say each part is fixed in its familiar place. The erotic, for instance, should open the ode and panegyric should follow it. If there is to be conventional wisdom "Hikmah" it should be at the end. The fact of this succession does not mean that this arrangement must perforce appear in each individual ode, but it does emphasize the favourite way of treating them. Erotic prelude nevertheless should<sup>(2)</sup> necessarily exist in the ode despite the fact that it has nothing to do with the real subject.

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(1) Zahr al-Adab; 3/17

(2) Ashshir; 14 - 15



"There are some poets who do not begin with the erotic prelude but they come to grips with what they wish, and deal with it hand to hand. This is known as "Batr", the "Wathb", "Kat'", "Iktidhab" (cut) . . . . each of these terms may be used. The ode if composed in this fashion was called "Batra" . . . curtailed, in the same way that the term was applied to rhetorical speech which commenced without the formula "in the name of God the Beneficient, the Merciful" as was customary".<sup>(1)</sup> These belong familiar words Ibn Rashik goes further to state the reason which impelled poets to choose the theme of love for the opening of their odes.<sup>(2)</sup> "Men have a special way of commencing odes with the erotic prelude the reason for which is to be found in the sentiment of the heart, expression of approval and an inclination towards diversion and women, all of which is in fact an introduction to what is to follow".<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) M. Umdah; 1/154 - 155 (in the verses) of the old Arabs

(2) Ibn Kotaiba in a casual allusion put forward a reason from which Ibn Rashik apparently made a great one of the advantage. Ashshir; 14 - 15 become proficient in

(3) M. Umdah; 1/150

(1) M. Umdah; 1/132. For al-Jahid's opinion, see

Bayan; 1/81

(2) M. Umdah; 1/83



It is demanded of the poet that he composes the several parts of his ode carefully and exquisitely. Poetic skill is impossible without familiarity with the poetry of the ancients which is almost infallible and always effective. Al-Asmai said "the poet cannot be of the first rank until he recites the poetry of the Arabs and knows their history and he should be familiar with their ideas and the words should revolve in his mind".<sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(2)</sup> "To the poets", Ibn Rashik asserts, "belong familiar words and well known examples in the same way as there belong to writers of prose special expressions known as "Kitabiyah", to the use of which they confined themselves. It is not befitting the poet to use words other than them excepting when he wishes to be elegant in the use of non-Arabic words, in which case he will use them sparingly and with moderation".<sup>(2)</sup>

"Skill with the tongue can only be acquired in its entirety through work and practice (in the verses) of the old Arabs until something like this skill is reached. Among the arts of speaking poetry is difficult to acquire for one of the present generation who wishes to become proficient in

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(1) *Al-Umdah*; 1/132. For al-Jahidh's opinion, see

*Bayan*; 1/81

(2) *Al-Umdah*; 1/83



the art. This is because of the independence of each verse, an independence which exists because the speech is completely adequate to its purpose and is fit to stand alone. For that reason a kind of proficiency is necessary until the speech of poetry is poured into the mould which is suited to it in this kind of Arabic poetry<sup>(1)</sup>. This opinion was strongly held ever since al-Jahidh had classified the poets according to their knowledge of old poetry<sup>(2)</sup>. and started the praise by "O 345 6"

Ibn Rashik emphasized the importance of the beginning and the end of the ode both of which in particular should be polished and should receive much attention for the "opening of the ode is that which first strikes the ear and which indicates what the poet has to say in the first instance". "The poet", he goes on, "should avoid the use of "Ala", "Kad", and "Khaliliaya", especially in the beginning of the ode - for they are signs of weakness and lack of self reliance. As for the conclusion, it is the foundation of the ode and the last thing which remains in the ear. It should be well constructed and it should not

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(1) al-Mukaddimah; 570-59

(2) Bayan; 2/4 - 51 - 352

(3) The 'Ish: Parts poetica in the 8eme Congrès International des Orientalistes, 1889



be added to, and nothing should come after it which is superior to it. If the first part of the poem is the key (1) then the last part should be its lock".

On digression or deviation "Khuruj" from one subject to another or especially from the erotic to praise two views may be stated. One maintained that subjects should be linked by certain terms as was the habit of the ancients who finished their erotic prelude by "دعنا" and "الى مدح" (2) and started the praise by "مدحنا" and "الى مدح".

The others apparently preferred the poet not to be bound by these terms but rather to switch from one hemistich to the other without using them. (3)

Concerning the content of poetry, critics began with two points neither of which were considered essential in the general canons of poetry, these two points are: exaggeration of ideas and to what extent the poet should observe the truth. It seems that the succeeding critics

The first point manifested itself in the pre-Islamic poetry but it was according to the critics, almost entirely natural, that is to say poets did not strive to exaggerate their

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(1) Umdah; 1/145 and 159

(2) Sina'atun; 361 - 362 was al-Za'ani; 1/24

(3) Tha'lab; L'arte poetica in the 8eme Congrès international des Orientalists, 1889



ideas or exceed the normal boundaries in expressing their grief or admiration. These qualities were expressed naturally and not artificially. <sup>(1)</sup> In the Muwallads a conscious effort was made to express these emotions with a consequent loss of charm. <sup>(2)</sup> Al-Jahidh frequently condemned moderation which is neither exaggeration nor understatement. <sup>(3)</sup> Al-Mubarrid, his disciple, in a casual allusion opposed exaggeration. <sup>(4)</sup> The first critic who admired this style and expressed support for it was Kudama. "Exaggeration is the more excellent of the two schools, and to it adhered in former times those who had knowledge of poetry and poets. I have heard that one of them said "the best poetry is that which contains most falsehood". Despite the emphasis which he laid on this point, on more than one occasion, it seems that the succeeding critics did not follow him in popularizing this style.

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(1) Sina'atun; 283

(2) Bayan; 1/81

(3) Kamil; 2/44

(4) Nakd Ashshir; 19. Diwan al-Ma'ani; 1/24

(1) Bayan; 2/49

(2) Bayan; 2/24

(3) Bayan; 2/49

(5) Bayan; 2/5 - 6



Al-Askari mentioned what he called "hyperbole" and exaggeration to which Ibn Rashik later added one further category called "Ighrak", but neither of them approved the application of these styles. Ibn Rashik strongly criticized exaggeration on the grounds that it was far removed from the moral and familiar life of the community.<sup>(1)</sup> As for the extent to which the poet should observe the truth, we would not expect that there would be much difference of opinion on this point in the early days. Islam already denounced poets and described them as followed by misguided people, raving in every valley and saying what they do not do.<sup>(2)</sup> This idea held general sway up to the days of Kudama. Al-Asmai said "poetry has a tendency to become strong and facile in evil. When it concerns itself with what is good it becomes weak". Hassan was of the first rank of the poets in the Jahiliya and when Islam came his poetry became weak and decrepit. It was said to him, "your poetry has become weak and out of place", he replied, "Islam forbids me to lie", by which he meant that excellence in poetry lies in exaggeration and that is lying which is forbidden in Islam.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) M. Umdah; 2/49

(2) 26 : 224

(3) Ibn al-Athir; Usd al-Ghabah; 2/5 - 6



Kudama was the only critic who repudiated this assumption and found no room for it in poetry. He, in so doing, liberated the poets and put poetry in its appropriate place - independent of religion. repeated the same idea.

"The poet", he stated, "need not be truthful but it is only required of him that when he takes any particular idea he should make it perfect at that particular time and it is not required of him to contradict " <sup>(1)</sup> later what he said at that time". Elsewhere he explained himself more

plainly. <sup>(2)</sup> "If the poet contradicts himself in two odes or speeches, that is to say if he describes a thing favourably and then afterwards criticized it with an equally apt and clear description, this should not be subject regarded as a fault if his praise and his satire are

equally well composed". "Indeed that to me indicates the <sup>(2)</sup> ability of the poet in his art". Poetry, on the other

<sup>(3)</sup> hand, can neither uphold nor destroy religious morals but it deals with them from the point of view of the art.

Poets in doing so are neither to be reproached nor blamed.

"Absurdity is not incompatible with good poetry as carpentry cannot be reproached on the grounds that the <sup>(3)</sup> wood itself is bad". poetry into two main parts:

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(1) Nakd Ashshir; 6. Ikd; 3/147 raised the subjects of

(2) Nakd Ashshir; 4. See: al-Mustatraf; 2/155

(3) Nakd Ashshir; 5



These unique, and indeed revolutionary, ideas were adopted in their entirety by some later critics.

According to al-Amidi, "it is not required of the poet to express the truth".<sup>(1)</sup> Al-Askari repeated the same idea.

"Nothing is desired from the poet except beauty of words and perfection of ideas, and this it is which allows the use of lies and the like. This formula was used merely

It was said to a certain philosopher that "so and so lies in his poetry". He replied, "beauty of words is required from the poet, and the truth is required from the prophet".<sup>(2)</sup>

It is apparent that neither of the two could classify under these headings elegy and description which formed poetry.

There are two opinions on poetry; one stresses the subject-matter, the other the state of mind of the poet. The former opinion, held by the majority of critics confined all subjects to: panegyric, love, elegy and satire to which al-Rummani added description.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) al-Muwazanah; 174

(2) Sina'atun; 103

(3) See Diwan al-Ma'ani; 1/91

Kudama classified poetry into two main parts:

panegyric and satire. He, however, added other parts

as subsiduaries. Al-Ibshihi raised the subjects of

poetry to eighteen. See: al-Mustatraf; 2/165



The latter school put forward the emotions of the poet and the style which resulted from them. Critics failed, however, to attain a clear understanding of this, and did not abide by their conclusions with consistency. They stated that the sources of poetry were: desire, fear, rapture, and anger which successively produced: panegyric, apology, lyric and satire. (1) This formula was used merely to compare one poet to another. (2) Ibn Kotaibah was the first to set out such a classification (3) and he was followed by Ibn Rashik. (4) It is apparent that neither of the two could classify under these headings elegy and description which formed a considerable part of poetry. which answer the true

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(1) Tha'lab assigns to poetry a fourfold function: (1) command, prohibition, giving and asking for information. (2) These sources branch into praise, polimio, satire, elegy, apology, love, comparision and narrative.

See: L'Arte Poetica, 8eme Congrès International.

(1) Grunebaum; Mediaeval Islam; 262 al-Irak; 9 - 11

(2) Thus al-Asmai' said: Zuhair was the best poet in desire, al-Nabighah in fear, al-A'sha in rapture and Antara in anger. See: Agh; 8/77. Ikd; 3/186

(3) Ashshir; 8

(4) Umdah; 1/78



Classification of poetry therefore was derived rather from the subject-matter itself than from the emotions which gave rise to it. It was description which alone puzzled the critics. Consequently their attempt to formulate rules applicable to it or even to define it were (1) a complete failure.

Kudama defined description as the "portrayal of a thing by means of the circumstances and features appertaining to it". Then he added a few points concerning its nature. "Most of the descriptions of the poets refer to things which are composed of several ideas. Therefore the best of them at description is he who includes in his poetry the greatest number of ideas which answer the true description of the thing described, then the most obvious thing concerning it and the things most relevant to it until he has finally described it and given it concrete (2) form to the senses by means of this description". His definition is very vague.

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(1) See: Jamil Sa'id: Al-Wasf fi Shir al-Irak; 9 - 11

(2) Nakd Ashshir; 41

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(1) Nakd Ashshir; 17

(2) Nakd Ashshir; 2/226. Shir'atun; 97



As it stands, it includes every subject of poetry. Kudama himself states his position more clearly when he confines the subjects of poetry to five, one of which is description.<sup>(1)</sup> Ibn Rashik, with the definition of Kudama in mind, regarded description as including every subject. He, however, distinguished description from simile. "Poetry, with slight exceptions, belongs to description, and it is not possible to classify it and set it out in detail. It has resemblance to simile which is of it but it is not its whole constituent, for simile frequently occurs in description but the difference between them is that the description gives the reality of a thing and the simile is rhetorical". "The best description is that which describes the thing until it almost gives it concrete form as if the eyes of the hearers behold it".<sup>(2)</sup> The other subjects were clearly explained and carefully set out. Here is a concise statement concerning each which is obviously dignified and serious. It is required of the poet that he polish his works and refine his ideas.

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(1) Nakd Ashshir; 17

(2) M. Umdah; 2/226. Sina'atain; 97



in order to adapt his work to his environment and, moreover, to gain both the Panegyric of the man to whom he dedicates his ode, and also the appreciation of his audience.

From the early days of the Jahiliya, panegyric occupied the most favourable place in comparison with the other subjects of poetry. It was natural that the Arabs whose lives were so subject to the influence of many tribal customs and manners, should greatly admire "Madh".

Thus, the Midhah - poems of praise - whether written about the leader of the tribe or the tribe itself or even the poet, gained a very wide circulation. It was, however, part of a composite ode the whole of which should be a unity in language and style and should be capable of affecting the hearer deeply.

Umar Ibn al-Khattab said "among the best creations of the Arabs are the verses which a man recites in his need to seek the favour of the generous and move the miser to pity". This statement shows the background of elegy - a background which is obviously dignified and serious. It is required of the poet that he polish his works and refine his ideas

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(1) Bayan; 2/50. 171

(2) Ikd; 3/119



(1)  
in order to adapt his work to his environment and, moreover, to gain both the reward of the man to whom he dedicates his ode, and also the appreciation of his audience.

"It was the fashion among some poets of the first rank in the Jahiliya to produce a single ode every year, to which they gave the name "the yearly". In so doing they found enough time to correct the ode and to make it perfect.

(2)  
This method found general favour although Zuhair and his colleagues who followed it, were called "the slaves of poetry". (1)

Al-Jahidh put forward a justification of this practice and defended it. "For those who could make a living from poetry and seek through it the presents of nobles and leaders, and the rewards of kings and lords . . . there was no other method but that of Zuhair and those like him. If they composed for other purposes they took whatever words came to mind and ceased to strain for effect". (2)

As it was customary to open the ode with love, poets were urged to express certain known points only and to strike a balance between the length of the prelude and the eulogy.

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- (1) Bayan; 2/6 as to use in your prelude. If you desire my praise, then shorten your prelude. Then he came to him and recited the following; "do you know the house of Um Amr? Leave it, and compose with care, praise to Kaab". Kaab said to him, "neither this nor that but between the two".



(1)  
which has to follow. "The poet should mention, in the opening of the ode, his crossing of the desert, the camels which he reduced to exhaustion, what he suffered from the terrors of the night, his sleeplessness, the heat and the tedium of the day and the scarcity of water. Then he goes on to praise the one for whose sake he has undergone these trials in order to put the latter under an obligation to him that he may accord him the dues of praise". (2)

Ibn Rashik opposed his contemporaries and those who lived before, from among the Muwallads, who followed this procedure. <sup>verbal rules for the writing of eulogy.</sup> His "They were in old times tent dwellers who moved from one place to another and for that reason the first thing that is manifest in their poems is talk of encampments, and these encampments of theirs were not like the houses of the town dwellers. It is not befitting to the town

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(1) "A poet came to Nasr Ibn Sayyar and praised him in an ode, the erotic prelude of which consisted of one hundred verses while its eulogy consisted of ten verses. Nasr said, "By God, you have not left one beautiful word, nor pleasant idea except you have taken it away from my praise to use in your prelude. If you desire my praise, then shorten your prelude. Then he came to him and recited the following; "do you know the house of Um Amr? Leave it, and compose with care, praise to Nasr". Nasr said to him, "neither this nor that but between the two".



dwellers that they should talk about encampments except metaphorically because towns could not be blown down by the wind nor demolished by rain".<sup>(1)</sup> When Ibn al-Khattab said Most of the Islamic and Umayyad's poetry conforms to the above pattern. It was admired by later critics such as al-Jahidh and Ibn Sallam but they did not set out definite rules by virtue of which they valued the "Midhah". Their appreciation was mainly based on the general taste and preference of the Arabs. It is also necessary to praise, and Kudama was the pioneer who undertook this task and put forward several rules for the writing of eulogy. His rules are unique and in some respects foreign to Arabic thought. Justice, and honesty. The one who aspires to praise The Moderns suspect the originality of his ideas, a factor which does not concern us here. They cannot, however, deny his deep influence on succeeding critics, who appear to have copied his scheme.<sup>(2)</sup> Kudama set out a moral basis in accordance with which praise should be composed, and he discouraged the praise of wealth

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(1) al-Umdah; 1/151, a factor which distinguished

(2) See al-Umdah; 2/20

(3) See al-Umdah; 2/20



or physical attributes on the grounds that the "moral qualities" are to men as "physical attributes" are to beasts. "What a fine thing when Umr Ibn al-Khattab said of Zuhair that "he did not praise a man except for those qualities which appertain to men". This speech if it is understood and applied will be to the general advantage, namely the knowledge that if it is necessary to praise men only for manly characteristics which belong to them and are contained in them, it is also necessary to praise any thing only for the qualities which rightly belong to it and are contained in it".<sup>(1)</sup>

qualities which rightly belong to men are: intelligence, courage, justice, and honesty. "He who aspires to praise men for those four qualities is following the right course, while he who praises without them is in error". "It may happen that a poet praises certain of these qualities and exaggerates and diversifies the ideas".<sup>(2)</sup>

Kudama proceeds to put forward many details concerning his thesis in order to make it applicable. These details demonstrate his desire to establish definite rules for the praise of every class of men, a factor which distinguished him from other critics.

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(1) Nakd Ashshir; 20

(2) Ibid; 20



"Poems in praise of men are in degrees according to the class of men, high or low, who are praised and their abodes whether in town or in the desert".<sup>(1)</sup> "Ministers and secretaries should be praised for the becoming qualities of intelligence, deliberation, ability to make up their minds quickly and statesmanship. If there is added to these alacrity of resolution . . . .<sup>(2)</sup> that indeed will be the best and most perfect of praise".<sup>(3)</sup>

"The praise of the soldier should be for qualities like intrepidity, courage, and those which come under the heading of fortitude and daring".<sup>(4)</sup>

"As for that of the common people "Suka" from among the Bedouins or town dwellers, it is divided into two kinds according to the divisions of "suka", namely, into those who depend on various professions and crafts, and vagabonds, outlaws, pickpockets and others like them.

Praise of the first group is for moral qualities and the praise of the second group is for qualities suitable to the

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(1) Nakd Ashshir; 26

(2) He repeats the idea twice in different words.

(3) Nakd Ashshir; 27

(4) Nakd Ashshir; 27. al-Umdah; 2/108



mode of life, daring, high-handedness, readiness, alertness  
(1)  
and endurance".

Most of the eminent critics followed Kudama. Al-Askari  
for instance, considered praise as "faulty if the poet  
neglects the virtues which appertain to the soul . . . .  
(2)  
for what belongs to the descriptions of the body".

It was Ibn Rashik alone who found no significance in this  
limitation. He, however, added a few details to those of  
Kudama for the praise of various classes of man.

"It is the manner of the poet when praising a king to  
follow the way of clarity and glorification . . . . and  
to make his ideas forceful and his words pure without the  
use of commonplace expressions and those of the market  
place and at the same time to avoid brevity, extravagance  
(3)  
and verbosity".

"If the person praised is of lowly birth, beware of  
overstressing his merit for when you do overstress his  
(4)  
merit it is as if one detracted from it". As for the  
praise of the secretaries, wezirs and others, he recommended  
Kudama's suggestions and rules.

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(1) Nakd Ashshir; 28 - 29

(2) Sina'atain; 73

(3) Al-Umdah; 2/103

(4) Ibid; 2/103

(3) It is literally "our livers burn".



Kudama regarded elegy as a kind of praise and pointed out one slight difference between the two. "There is no difference between elegy and praise of a living man except Elegy. that the former refers to one who is dead by means of the words "Kana", "Qawalla", "Kadha Mahbahu" and the like.

This does not add to the idea nor take away from it, for a dead man is only praised as he was formerly praised in his life. It is thought that from the earliest time, elegy was an aspect of poetry which developed independently of the conventional design of the Kasida.

It was demanded of the poet that he treat his subject directly without the usual preliminaries of love. "It was not the custom of the poets to put the "Masib" before the living (1) that it embraces all the virtues which we have mentioned previously." (2)

Critics up to Kudama only made a few remarks about elegy, all of which were directed towards the circumstances rather than to the principles according to which it should be composed. "The Umayyads," al-Jahidh said, "would not accept a reciter unless he is a reciter of elegy. It was said, "why is that"? and the answer was because they pointed to the nobility of character". (2) Elsewhere he stated "it was said to a Bedouin, "why are your elegies the first of your poetry"? He replied, "because we compose (3) while our hearts are on fire".

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(1) Umdah; 2/123

(2) Bayan; 2/171

(3) It is literally "our livers burn".



Kudama regarded elegy as a kind of praise and pointed out one slight difference between the two. "There is no difference between elegy and praise of a living man except that the former refers to one who is dead by means of the words "Kana", "Tawalla", "Kadha Nahbahu" and the like. This does not add to the idea nor take away from it, for a dead man is only praised as he was formerly praised in his life".

"Exactitude of idea, nevertheless, demands that the subject matter of the elegy should progress in the same way as praise of the living man, resembling praise of the living in that it embraces all the virtues which we have mentioned previously".<sup>(1)</sup>

Al-Askari adopted these ideas without reference to Kudama. He only added a few details which are of little significance. "I have previously mentioned praise and satire and the use to which they should be put . . . . and I have left elegy and self-praise because they are included in praise, that is to say the term "Fakhr" means to praise one's self for innocence, honesty, knowledge, good bearing and the like, and elegy is the praise of the dead. The difference

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(1) Nakd Ashshir; 33



between it and eulogy is that you say "he is so and so" in the latter while in the former you say "he was so and so". "One should seek in elegy what is usually sought in praise. If it is desired to praise the dead for generosity and fortitude, for instance, one should say "generosity and fortitude have died" and not "he was generous and brave" because it is not fitting in elegy".<sup>(1)</sup>

"The poet should not say that the animals which the deceased had ridden to exhaustion in his life, such as horses and camels, wept for him but he should mention, on the other hand, their satisfaction at his death".

Ibn Rashik agreed in part with the opinions of Kudama and found them worthy of appreciation. He maintained that women can compete with men in this subject. Indeed

"because of what God has created in their character of weakness and lack of daring" they are more suitable to it than men.<sup>(2)</sup> "Elegy", he added, "is not comparable with other subjects. There are occasions where the poet faces an extreme difficulty in composing. One of these is in

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(1) Sina'atun; 99 - 100

(2) al-Umdah; 2/123

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(1) al-Umdah; 2/124

(2) Encyclopaedia of Islam; 1/402



lamenting a child or a woman because of the lack of material and the lack of description. The second is "to combine together consolation and congratulation in one place. That is if a king died and another one succeeded and it is incumbent on the poet to combine congratulation to the new one and condolences for the one who is dead (1) at one and the same time".

As for the first remark one can hardly accept this for if the poet is genuinely affected he will find the means of expressing himself.

It was found no admiration at court, nor at the height of the Umayyad era poets to avoid love-poems. It was not even your boys the poetry of Umar Ibn al-Rabi' because they might take to adultery. In spite of this opposition, erotic poetry survived and found a place in the circles of the Umayyads during the whole Umayyad era. Before the end of their reign it found its way to court, where it was eagerly read even before the

### Love-poetry.

It is a general opinion that the love-ode had lost its original character and had degenerated into something conventional and commonplace which was affixed to the beginning of the Kasida. (2) This idea is only an assumption and cannot be proved. It seems likely, however, that the Jahilees who produced independent elegy and satire could have produced also independent love-poems.

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(1) al-Umdah; 2/124

(2) Encyclopaedia of Islam; 1/402



"Ghazal", "Nasib", and "Tashbib" are interchangeable with slight technical difference. (1)

The motive for composing love-poetry very seldom appears to have been genuine passion or sentiment.

Poets expressed a deep grief and a true love for the deserted encampments rather than for their beloved.

Love-poetry in particular found no admiration at court, neither in early Islam nor at the height of the Umayyad era

Umar the first urged poets to avoid love-poems. (2) It was

also said "do not teach your boys the poetry of Umar Ibn Abi Rabia' because they might take to adultery. (3) In spite

of this opposition, erotic poetry survived and found a place in the circles of the singers during the whole

Umayyad era. Before the end of their reign it found its way to court, where it was eagerly read even before the time of al-Walid who was himself a poet, and contributed much to the structure and diction of the love-ode.

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(1) al-Umdah; 2/94

(2) Yakut - Irshad; 4/154. Agh; 4/98

(3) Agh; 1/35.



Critics, from Kudama onward, asserted that unity of motive and simplicity of structure should be the distinctive mark of the love-ode.

(1)  
"The perfect erotic poem", Kudama pointed out, "in which the poet achieves his object is that in which there are many signs of extravagant love, and in which there appears excess of love-sickness and inordinate desire. And there should be in it more of emotion and delicacy than of roughness and endurance, and more of humility than of pride and arrogance".  
(1)

Your love-odes should  
"Good love-poetry requires simplicity of words and poems mastery of straight-forward and simple structure which only true feeling can give, and which "coming from the heart goes to the heart".  
(2)  
same type as your serious poems, Simplicity of structure should be accompanied by an instinctive awareness of the appropriate metre.  
(2)  
Kudama put forward this view for the first time and al-Ash'ari followed him. "If you wish to compose poetry,

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(1) Nakd Ashshir; 43. Sina'atain; 97 - 99

(2) Nakd Ashshir; 175 - 76

(3) Sina'atain; 27. an advertisement for life, but it was also

directed against an

(4) Sina'atain; 175 - 76



prepare the idea which you desire to express in your mind and bring it near to your heart and then seek for it a metre which fits its composition and a rhyme which is (1) suitable to it".

Al-Jurjani added few details about the use of words.

"I do not order you to compose all kinds of poetry according to one style nor do I order you to approach them all in the same manner in which you approach some, but it is my opinion that you should select words according to the style of poetry. Your love-odes should not be like your threats, nor your satire like the poems which you compose in begging (Istibta' - to hasten beneficence) nor should that which you compose in frivolous vein be of the same type as your serious poems, nor should your allusion be like your plain statement (2) but arrange everything according to its class".

Ibn Rashik seems to approve the mention of more than one feminine name in the ode. "The poets have certain names which are light on their tongues and which are sweet in

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(1) Sina'atun; 104

(2) Wasatah; 27. an adornment to life, but it was also feared as a dangerous weapon which, directed against an

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(1) al-Jurjani; 2/308 98



their mouths and very often these names are imagery (they use them falsely) such as "Hind", "Salma", and "Laila" . . . they introduce them for the sake of the metre and to decorate the "Nasib".<sup>(1)</sup>

"The poet", he added, "should show his grief and suffering for his beloved and he should portray her as arrogant and proud". "It was the custom of the Arabs that the man should pursue and pretend to be dying of love, but the Persians made the woman the one who sought and who desired".

Satire. Indeed, poetry in general and satire in particular was denounced later by Islam. Poets, nevertheless, continued their careers despite severe punishments. Umar the first

From the earliest times, there had been a close connection between poetry and magic, and long after this connection ceased, there still survived a vague notion that the poets had supernatural powers capable of casting their spell over the person to whom the right kind of speech or song was addressed. For this reason the art of the poet was not only valued as an adornment to life, but it was also feared as a dangerous weapon which, directed against an

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(1) al-Umdah; 2/100 98



enemy, was not only capable of putting him to shame by  
ridicule, but even had the power of laming his energy. (1)

Satire was thus one of the earliest forms of poetry which  
were in origin, a supplement to the material assault of  
sword and lance. (2)

Its style was always simple and  
intelligible. Poets, however, rarely used vulgar or  
obscene expressions. In the main they achieved their  
purpose by ridiculing their enemies, by exposing any of  
their habits which did not conform to conventions.

Strange as it may seem, in the animosity between the poets  
who adhered to Muhammad and the unbelievers we find more  
vulgarity and obscenity than formerly.

Indeed, poetry in general and satire in particular was  
denounced later by Islam. Poets, nevertheless, continued  
their careers despite severe punishments. Umar the first  
put al-Hutaya in prison for a long time because he satirized  
al-Zibrikan Ibn Badr. (3)

It is interesting, however, to listen to Umar advising him,  
after his release on how to practise satire.

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(1) See: Goldziher; Abhandlungen Zur Arabischen  
Philologie 1/26-27

(2) Encyclopaedia of Islam (Shir); 4/373

(3) Id.; 3/139

(4) Encyclopaedia of Islam 1/402

(5) Id.; 1/135



"Beware of obscene satire". When the poet asked him "what obscenity was", Umar replied, "it is obscenity if you say that these people are more virtuous than these or more noble, or if you compose poetry in the praise of certain people in order to satirize those who are your enemies".<sup>(1)</sup>

Uthman Ibn Affan also kept "Dhobia Ibn al-Harith" in prison till he died because he lampooned the "Banu Nahshal".<sup>(2)</sup>

Under the Umayyads satire temporarily dominated the whole field of literature.<sup>(3)</sup> Al-Farazdak and his opponents found no real obstacle to the rise of cheap and obscene noble, if expressions. Their style was often denounced by the critics, who, however, put forward as an alternative only a few general ideas. He have followed his lead without

Abu-Amr Ibn al-Ala' said "The best kind of satire is that which a maiden might recite in the seclusion of her own chamber".<sup>(4)</sup> Khalaf al-Ahmar asserted that "the most powerful satire is that which is most chaste and most truthful". Many critics repeated these ideas or suggested others similar to them but Kudama was the pioneer who formulated practical ideas.

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(1) al-Umdah; 2/138

(2) Ibn Sallam, Tabakat; 40 supported this principle;

(3) Encyclopaedia of Islam; 1/402

(4) al-Umdah; 2/138. Dissan al-Ma'ani; 1/202



He apparently applied the same basis and divisions of eulogy to satire. "Consider the divisions of eulogy and its ideas. Satire may be composed along the same lines<sup>(1)</sup> and degrees but the ideas should be the opposite".

"Whenever the opposites of praise are multiplied, these<sup>(2)</sup> become more satirical".

"When the satirist denies to the object of his satire qualities which are not virtues, that is a fault in satire. To describe him, for example, as ugly of face, small of stature, insignificant of physique or miserly or poverty stricken, or as coming from a tribe which is not noble, if his deeds are of themselves good and his characteristics<sup>(3)</sup> are honourable and noble".

Later critics appear to have followed his lead without adding anything of value.

<sup>(4)</sup> Al-Askari said, "it is fitting that satire should detract from good qualities which appertain to the soul and emphasize the bad qualities which also appertain to it. It is fitting that the lamponist should attribute to the object of his lampoon meanness or parsimony or greed or the

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(1) Nakd Ashshir; 33

(2) Ibid; 30

(3) Ibid; 73. Ibn Rashik supported this principle;  
al-Umdah; 2/141

(4) Sina'atain; 78. Diwan al-Ma'ani; 1/202



like, and it is not fitting to attribute to him ugliness of face or smallness of stature".

Al-Jurjani stated that "the most effective satire is that which is woven on the loom of mockery and ridicule and lies between plain speech and innuendo; also that of which the ideas are easily remembered and not far-fetched". (1)

POETS FROM BAGHDAD TO MOSUL  
Poets from Baghdad to Mosul practised their art under very unusual circumstances. Baghdad, as has been stated, was going through a period of transition. The currents of the foreign intellectual and scientific movements influenced and often prevailed in many departments of life. Poets favoured these currents and actively participated in them. The result of this amalgamation appeared distinctly not only in the language of poetry but also in its form and contents. The outward form of the "Kasida" which had hitherto been generally accepted came to be frequently abandoned. Bala al-Khasir produced an ode of one foot "Mustafilan". Ibn Rushik maintained that Bala was the pioneer who produced such verse. It runs:-

(1) Wasatah; 27

موسى الطرا

غنى

الهم

الون

المرز

الم

الم



# CHAPTER IV

Al-Jasburi called this type of poetry "al-Makta".

Ibn Poets and the contents of poetry. marked a practical step to the emancipation of poetry from unity of rhyme.

Poets from Bashshar to <sup>IBN AL-MUTAZZ</sup> practised their art under very unusual circumstances. Baghdad, as has been stated, was going through a period of transition. The currents of the foreign intellectual and scientific movements influenced and often prevailed in many departments of life. Poets favoured these currents and actively participated in them. The result of this amalgamation appeared distinctly not only in the language of poetry but also in its form and contents. The outward form of the "Kasida" which had hitherto been generally accepted came to be frequently abandoned. Salm al-Khasir produced an ode of one foot "Mustafilun". Ibn Rashik maintained that Salm was the pioneer who produced such form. It runs:-

(3) <sup>بستيفك ساق</sup>  
<sup>بدر اشتياق</sup>  
ال موسى المطيار من

(1) <sup>غيث بدر</sup> <sup>1/123</sup>

(2) <sup>المهم</sup> <sup>2/33</sup> <sup>المهم</sup> <sup>1/22</sup> <sup>المهم</sup> <sup>7/22</sup>

(3) <sup>المهم</sup> <sup>345</sup> <sup>المهم</sup> <sup>1/96</sup> <sup>37</sup>

المهم

المهم



(1) Yakut, Irshad; - 1194. al-Umdah; 1/123

(2) Diwan Ibn al-Mu'tazz; 2/53. Yakut, however, attributed this stanza to Ibn Zuhri who lived in Spain in the 6th century; Irshad; 7/22

(3) employed 346 the majority of the poets, but not (1) **وكم قدر**

it occurred several times in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's Diwan. Al-Jawhari called this type of poetry "al-Makta".

Abu-Nuwas employed it particularly in his hunting-poetry. Ibn al-Mu'tazz produced a stanza which marked a practical step to the emancipation of poetry from unity of rhyme.

general survey of the history of the Abbasid dynasty up to (1) **ايها الساقى اليك المشتكى قد دعوناك وان لم تسبح**

called "lampechna" (2) **ونديم همت في غمرته**

"Rajaz", moreover, came to be used in didactic poetry. (3) **وبشرب الراح من راحته**

Abu al-Lahki was the first to employ it in a long "urjuzah" (2) **فلما استيقظ من سكرته**

famous story called "Kalila wa Dimnah". His son, (3) **مذب الزق اليه واتكا وسقاي اربا في اربع**

Abu-Nuwas, in like manner, produced two similar odes.

One of them runs:- (4) **سيفك وكن**

Abu, we are told, composed a number of odes built on (4) **كشس دهن**

(3) Al-Gali was very proud of composing long odes rhymed in (3) **كدم جفن**

that it might be recited before the Caliph (3) **كخر عدن**

al-Radi (3) **يستيق ساق**

was (3) **على اشتياق**

(3) **الى تلاقى**

(1) Yakut, Irshad; 4/248. al-Umdah; 1/123

(2) Diwan Ibn al-Mu'tazz; 2/53. Yakut, however, attributed this stanza to "Ibn Zuhri" who lived in Spain in the 6th century; Irshad; 7/22

(3) Diwan; 346. For the other ode see al-Damiri, Hayat al-Hayawan; (1/96 - 97); 10 - 16



"Rajaz" wherein every single couplet has a different rhyme was employed by the majority of the poets. It occurred several times in Ibn al-Rumi's Diwan. Abu-Nuwas employed it particularly in his hunting-poetry. Ibn al-Mutazz had two "urjuza", the first of which was a general survey of the history of the Abbasid dynasty up to the time of his uncle "al-Mu'tadhid", and the other was called "lamprooning the morning drink". "Rajaz", moreover, came to be used in didactic poetry. Aban al-Lahiki was the first to compose in a long "urjuza" the famous story called "Kalila wa-Dimnah". His son, "Hamdan", in a like manner, produced an "urjuza" about love. The rhyme of poetry became more complicated in that some poets had chosen unusual characters as the rhyming letter. Aban, we are told, composed a hundred odes built on "ع ز ث ط". Al-Suli was very proud of composing a long ode rhymed in "ض" that it might be recited before the Caliph al-Radhi.

(1) Z. D. M. B. XL, 1886 p. 563

(2) Awrak; 1/49

(3) Awrak; 1/57

(4) Diwan Abu-Nuwas (introduction); 13

(5) Awrak, "The years (330 - 333); 10 - 16



Ibn al-Mutazz applied what was technically called "Luzum  
(1)  
Mala-Yalzam" - introducing complications which are not  
demanded by text books on prosody.

(2)  
Ibn al-Rumi occasionally used this technique.

"Tadhmin", condemned by all critics who required that each  
line of the ode should stand alone, independent of what comes  
before or what comes after it, was occasionally disregarded.  
One poem by Abul-Atahiya illustrates the interdependence of  
all the lines: being they fulfilled one requirement of the

يا ذا الذي في الحب يلحى أما والله لو كلفت منه كما  
كلفت من حب رجبى ما كنت على الحب فذرنى وما  
التي فأني لست أدري ما بليت إلا أنتى ينأ  
أنا بيا القصر - في بعض ما أطوف في قصرهم - اذ رمى  
أخطأ بها قلبي وكانها حلي غزال بلسانها  
سواء عنان له كلما أراد قتلي بها سألما

(3) in one style. A loose connection is only apparent.  
Ibn al-Rumi, in particular regarded the whole "Kasida" as one  
and as being incomplete as long as the idea which he sought  
(4)  
was in itself incomplete, but did not use Tadhmin.

(1) It is literally: "the imposing upon oneself what is not  
indispensable"; Diwan Ibn al-Mu'tazz; 12

(2) al-Marzubani, Mujam al-Shu'ara; 289

(3) al-Marzubani, al-Muwashshah; 261

(4) al-Akkad; Ibn al-Rumi; 308



This procedure was successfully applied by many poets outstanding among them Abu-Nuwas and Muti' Ibn Iyas. The classical sequence of the different part of the ode was strictly maintained in one subject only, namely in "praise". Poets almost invariably opened praise with love. Abu-Tammam, al-Buhturi and Ibn al-Rumi, however, occasionally substituted for the "Chazal" censure and complaint. Poets paid considerable attention to the opening of their odes. In so doing they fulfilled one requirement of the later critics who particularly emphasized the opening and the end of the "Kasida". Al-Buhturi and Abu-Tammam excelled (1) their contemporaries in these two points. They, nevertheless showed a complete failure in what was technically called "Khuruj" - transition from one subject to another. Neither of them could achieve satisfactory connection between the (2) various parts of the Kasida, nor could they make their odes run in one style. A loose connection is only apparent. Some of the old critics realized this defect and bitterly blamed the poets. Al-Bakillani mentioned this shortcoming in al-Buhturi and Ibn al-Athir seems to have been struck by the same fact.

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(1) Zahr al-Adab; 3/21. Wasatah; 45. al-Umdah; 1/156

(2) Ijaz; 66. al-Mathal al-Sair; 420



The usual method of the ancients was to use terms like "لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ" or "لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ" when they wished to switch from love to praise. The employment of such terms was indispensable to maintain the continuity of the ode. In the case of Abu-Tammam and al-Buhturi the prelude always stands alone with nothing to link it up with what comes after it. It could easily be dropped out of the Kasida without affecting its continuity, a fact which rendered it superfluous.

The vital contribution of the Muwallads as a whole is to be found in subjects other than panegyric; in love, description, elegy and satire. In these subjects the poets did violence to the requirements of the critics.

"Exaggeration", strictly condemned by the critics with the exception of Kudama, appeared abundantly.

"Stating the truth", on the other hand, was no longer held to be incumbent. The erotic prelude which once appeared in all themes except elegy fell into disrepute.

Muti' and Walibah sometimes dropped the prelude but Abu-Nuwas omitted it frequently.

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(1) A'lam al-Kalam; 23. Agh; 12/103 for the procedure of 'Mutia'.

(1) al-Muwallad; 1/133

Nicholson, Literary History; 286. al-Muwallad; 323

...the laughter of the world.

al-Muwallad; 1/133



Ibn Rashik said that "they maintained that the first to abandon the description of the ruined encampments in the opening of his ode was Abu-Nuwas in his verse:

"Weep not for Laila, be not joyful over Hind.

Drink among the flowers red wine which is like roses,

And his saying: (leaving) the ruined encampments

"Description of the ruined places is the

characteristic of heavy rhetoric. Therefore

diversify your description with the daughter of vine (1)

He attempted to substitute for the traditional prelude

praise of wine to which he devoted not only his poetry but

also his life. The Caliph imprisoned him because he was

notorious for his wine poetry and made him promise not to

mention it again. Abu-Nuwas said:

"Lend your poetry to the description of the ruined

encampments and the deserted dwelling. For how

often has the description of wine disgraced it

(poetry).

A sharp sword (the Caliph) has summoned me to the

description of ruined encampments.

My arms have no power to reject his command.

(1) al-Umdah; 1/155

Nicholson, Literary History; 286. Diwan; 323

Diwan Ibn al-Rumi; 1/135



Oh commander of the faithful, I hear and obey, even<sup>(1)</sup>  
though you demanded that I ride an uncouth steed".  
Poets, after Abu-Nuwas, followed him in omitting the  
prelude and often they ridiculed the ruined encampments,  
Ibn al-Rumi said:  
"I enjoyed myself (leaving) the ruined encampments  
for a pleasant garden which is not ruined".  
Dik al-Jin said:  
"They said "peace be unto you ruined place".  
I said "it is impossible to give peace to the  
ruined encampment"<sup>(2)</sup>.  
This emancipation was not achieved completely. It was  
merely a revolt against a practice which survived in its  
entirety until the days of Abu-Nuwas.

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(1) For more examples in lampooning the ruined encampments  
see: Diwan; 20, 241, 215, 316, 317, 319, 320, 321,  
322, 332, 333 Ibn Bashir".

(2) Diwan al-Ma'ani; 1/106

(3) The convention died hard. Bashshar opened one of his  
elegies with love; Agh (K); 3/234

Ibn al-Rumi opened his satire with love and justified  
his having done so.

"Do you not see that I prefaced my satire with "Nasib  
in order to please the hearing, and then my satire  
comes after to burn the hearts.

As the thunder storm comes after the rain and weeping  
comes after the laughter of the sword".

Diwan Ibn al-Rumi; 1/135



Poets, as has been mentioned, continued to employ the prelude. Even Abu-Nuwas opened his eulogy with love, and portrayed himself as riding the camel which he reduced to exhaustion and as crossing the desert to his "Mamduh".<sup>(1)</sup> Before proceeding to state the themes of poetry and the manner of their setting out by eminent poets, one remark is necessary. It is not among the official poets that one should seek the complete emancipation of poetry. They, as we will see, obeyed the dictates of public preference and the desires of their patrons. It should be sought among the poets who lived aloof from the court and its formal demands; and who devoted their poetry to the recording of their own personal experiences. Unfortunately we possess only a little information about such poets for the historians recorded the official history and literature. One poet, however, deserves mention here, namely, "Muhammad Ibn Bashir".

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(1) Wafayat (English version); 1/393. Wasatah; 224.

298. Sayyid Nawfal, Shi'r al-Tabia'; 162

(2) Wafat: 12/131. 133. 143. and love-poetry.

(3) Wafat: 1/112. Shi'r al-Tabia'; 1/113

(4) Wafat: 1/113



He avoided the accepted method of poetry and eschewed the life of the court. He made his own experience the subject of his poetry. We find him, for instance, satirizing the sheep which ate up his garden and his papers. When he requested from his neighbour the loan of a donkey to carry out some necessary business and his request was refused he composed a "Kasida" in praise of his own two legs which were capable of carrying him to where he wanted to go. A friend of his promised to give him Indian doves and this friend asked another of his friends to supply these birds in order that he might give them to the poet. The friend, however, changed the Indian doves for others of an inferior quality which he gave to Muhammad. The latter composed a long ode (1) recording this event.

Ibn Bashir was one example of the genuine revolt against traditions and of the class of poets who endeavoured to depict their own experience for their own satisfaction rather than for the satisfaction of others.

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(1) Agh; 12/131. 135. 143 (1)

(2) Al-Ha'man prohibited Abu-Huwaa.

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(1) Agh (K); 3/211. Zahr al-Adab; 2/133

(2) Al-Adab; 1/155



On the other hand, the Caliphs were in favour of a certain type of praise - a liking which was stimulated by further reasons to be mentioned later. Panegyric.

Al-Kali related that "poets came into the presence of Panegyric survived in its classical form. There were distinct reasons for its survival. Poets produced their praise mainly to earn a livelihood and not to express appreciation or esteem for their own sake. In so doing they used any medium which could put their patrons under an obligation to them and arouse their generosity. These patrons were generally the Caliphs, their governors and others who held influential positions in the state. The Caliphs endeavoured to publicise the more commendable aspects of their lives, and to demonstrate their respect for the traditional morals and social standards of the Arabs. Whether or not the Caliphs were genuine in so doing, is beside the point. Their object was to ensure for themselves a good reputation among their subjects. Thus the Caliphs occasionally banned a certain type of poetry which might antagonise the people. Al-Mahdi (1) prohibited Bashshar from composing love-poetry. (2) Al-Ma'mun prohibited Abu-Nuwas.

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(1) Agh (K); 3/212. Zahr al-Adab; 2/133

(2) Al-Umdah; 1/155



On the other hand, the Caliphs were in favour of a certain type of praise - a liking which was stimulated by further reasons to be mentioned hereafter.

Al-Kali related that "poets came into the presence of al-Mansur and he gave them permission to recite their poetry from behind a curtain. Then "Ibn Harmah" came in last of all and he recited to him until he came to the following verse:

"To come to you, oh commander of the faithful, our camels had crossed with us many deserts in the heart of the waterless waste".

Al-Mansur said "oh boy" - addressing his slave - "raise the curtains", and he commanded that the poet should be given (1) ten thousand dinars.

While al-Rashid was on pilgrimage, a Bedouin of Benu Asad recited poetry in which he praised him. Al-Rashid turned to the reciter and said, "have I not prohibited you from composing such as this, oh man of Benu Asad"? (2) If you compose imitate "Marwan Ibn Abi Hafsah":

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(1) Dail al-Amali; 40

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(1) Iksa; 3/127. Riwan al-Ma'ani; 1/47-78.

(2) Zahr al-Adab; 3/66. Riwan al-Ma'ani; 1/28.



"Benu Matar in the day of battle are lions having  
cubs in the forest of Khiffan.  
They defend their neighbours until it is as if their  
neighbours have dwellings between the two heavens.  
They were heroes; they were nobles in Islam and  
there were no noble men comparable with their fore-  
fathers in Jahiliya.  
They are the (noble) people. If they promise they  
fulfil, if they are called they answer, and if they  
give, they give generously. None, even though they  
give generously in adversity and do good, can  
perform the like of their deeds".<sup>(1)</sup>

The poets were gathered in the Court of "al-Mu'tasim" in  
order to be received by him and recite praise. He  
ordered that no-one would be accepted in his presence save  
him who could recite a Kasida similar to that of "al-Mansur  
al-Namiri" in praising "al-Mansur". All went away except  
"Muhammad Ibn Wahab" who was bold enough to recite an ode  
which satisfied the Caliph.<sup>(2)</sup>  
The patrons, as we see, dictated their preference and  
frequently refused to countenance anything else. This

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(1) Ikd; 3/127. Diwan al-Ma'ani; 1/47-78. It was

(2) Zahr al-Adab; 3/66. Diwan al-Ma'ani; 1/28



fondness for a certain pattern was stimulated by two motives both of which hindered any progress in the poetry of praise. The first was the personal taste of the Caliphs who received their education under the philologists and grammarians. The time for asking protection from torturers. Their taste naturally was moulded in accordance with the preference of these masters who, as it is known, showed great favour for the classical literature. The other motive was merely political. The Abbassids doubtless needed the adherence of the poets in order to make their virtues known and to popularize the idea of their legitimate inheritance of the Caliphate. Poets were also useful in that they could justify the persecution of their rivals such as the Alids and the Umayyads. The former reason, therefore, governed the form and the latter governed the contents of the praise. Poets throughout this era produced two parallel forms of poetry the first of which was formal and the other personal. In the former they were strictly subjected to the factors which have been mentioned. One example will show conscious obedience to the will of the Caliphs. "Al-Hasan Ibn Hani', Sari' al-Chawani and Abul-Atahiya" were gathered together in the mosque of "Kufa". It was said to Abul-Atahiya, "recite some poetry", and he court, produced these lines: here, namely, al-Sukturi.



"Oh my mistress whom I would ransom with my soul,  
tell what is my fault, and I will perform whatever  
you desire in your wisdom.

By the sight of God you have tortured me enough and  
this is the time for asking protection from torture.  
Al-Sari' then recited:

"You have known my secret and my open thought. Go  
your way, tyranny is not my way.  
She who, I hoped, would change her way, gave  
satisfaction and obeyed me after having been  
disobedient".

Abu-Nuwas recited:

"Oh daughter of the Shaikh, give us the morning  
drink. For what are you waiting? The water  
flowed in the tree, then make the wine flow in us".  
It is said to him, "this is frivolous" do recite something  
serious" and he produced:

"Whose is the ruined encampment? Its place is  
empty and obscured. The winds have obliterated  
it and caused it to perish".<sup>(1)</sup>

The poets had a clear idea of these two forms of poetry.  
Praise was referred to as serious in order to distinguish  
it from the less formal production.

One poet among many who confined their poetry to the court,  
deserves mentioning here, namely, al-Buhturi.



Al-Buhturi.

This poet was undoubtedly one of the eminent encomiasts of the era. He first became court-poet in the reign of "al-Mutawakkil", when he enjoyed the patronage of "al-Fath Ibn Khakan" to whom his "Hamasa" was dedicated. (1) His success as court-poet naturally brought him into contact with all the leading men of the state - The Wezirs, judges, secretaries and the like. He, therefore, composed in one theme, the praise of these patrons. His diwan contains thirty five odes on al-Mutawakkil, thirty on al-Mu'tazz and fifteen on al-Mu'tamid. In addition to these there are more than one hundred and thirty odes in praise of the governors and other men. (2) Thus his poetry is extremely valuable from the historical point of view. In his vivid style he depicted many important events which occurred in his time. (3) The persecutions of the Alids, the dispute between the "Mawali and the Arabs", and the rebellions of some tribe against the government, all found a place in his poetry.

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(1) Wafayat (English version); 3/657. Encyclopaedia of Islam; 1/778

(2) Umara' al-Shi'r; 192. Al-Mathal al-Sair; 420

(3) Udaba' al-Arab; 216



Praise, we are told, reached its apogee with al-Buhturi - an assumption which needs clarification if we are to accept it completely. What the critics meant by it is vague. If they threw emphasis on the form, it would be equally right to claim any eminent encomiast as an excellent master. If that emphasis was directed to the contents the same objection would apply.

It seems, however, that two factors had struck the critics and caused them to claim al-Buhturi as unique. The first was the number of his panegyrics and the second was the vividness of his language. The former of course could in no way be a certain criteria by which to assess the value of the poet; the latter, however, is perfectly valid.

Al-Buhturi employed words of great vividness and harmony, and directed his talent to making his poetry intelligible. He, unlike Abu-Tammam, avoided complexity of ideas and philosophical and rhetorical ambiguities which would only have obscured his meaning. This procedure together with his strict imitation of the classical pattern attracted his patrons and won him high praise among the critics. This explains the high esteem and preference for al-Buhturi shown by the critics, who called his poetry "the chains of gold".<sup>(1)</sup>

سلسلة الذهب

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(1) Miftah al-Sa'adah; 1/94. Al-Mathal al-Sair; 420

(3) Ibid; 1/3



Al-Amidi was probably alluding to this fact when he claimed that "his poetry was that of the Bedouins and in accordance with the way of the ancients". He added that "al-Buhturi did not deviate from the fundamental principles of poetry".<sup>(1)</sup>

ما فارق عود الشعر  
"destroyed his originality" as al-Iskari put it.<sup>(2)</sup>  
It is strange enough to find al-Buhturi frequently directed his amatory prelude to his patron. In a certain sense he

Al-Buhturi opened most of his panegyrics with the erotic prelude which, almost invariably, seems out of place.

One is conscious of the irrelevance of the prelude because there is nothing in it which connects it with what follows. This, however, does not detract from the beauty of the prelude itself. It sometimes contains either warm love and genuine grief or vivid images and highly picturesque phrases.<sup>(2)</sup>

He often portrays himself as riding a camel or he might mention "rain", a "gazelle", a "desert" and other themes which occurred in the classical pattern of praise. You

"We visit the prince of the believers, although there is between him and us wide stretches of desert country".<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) al-Muwazanah; 1 - 2

(2) Diwan; 1/80. 82. Ijaz; 66

(3) Ibid; 1/3



"She disliked my departure (from her) and I said to her, "he who drove the camels, directed them (1) towards the Caliph".

In addition to inventing his own ideas, he frequently plagiarized the ideas of the old masters, a fact which (2) "destroyed his originality" as al-Askari put it. It is strange enough to find al-Buhturi frequently directed his amatory prelude to his patron. In a certain ode he was not ashamed of reminding "al-Fath" of the previous days when he used to "kiss him and suck his spittle".

"From me devout attendance and from you rebuff;  
in me there is humility and in you pride. I  
was formerly free (from your love) and you were  
slave (to my love); I became the slave and  
you became free.

Do you remember how many nights we diverted ourselves in its shade while time was pleasant. Their darkness disappeared for what night can be dark to us while you are the moon. You mixed your spittle for me in wine both drinks (3) from you are wine".

In another ode the prelude was about the Caliph "al-Mutawakkil".

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(1) Diwan; 1/43

(2) Diwan al-Ma'ani; 1/22. 34 the "Inan", you will find

(3) Diwan; 1/44



"Oh you blamer who are not satisfied, sleep (1)  
well for I do not enjoy sleep. of the world".

From your love I have suffering which destroys  
my sleep and because of your love I have a bed  
which is rough. My eyelids shed tears which  
do not cease, and my heart grieves without  
cessation.

Oh you of little justice, how many promises  
have been made by you which remain unfulfilled.  
Reward me with your present if it is indeed a  
reward, and compensate me with your love even  
though it is not genuine.

I ransom you with my father, oh beautiful lords,  
gazelle with drooping eyelids, who possesses  
my heart.

Your love (it is "his love") tempted me and I  
began to manifest some of this and conceal some  
of it from the people.

I shall not forget him appearing from near at  
hand swaying like a green twig (neither shall I  
forget) my eating the apples of his cheeks,  
kissing sometimes and smelling and biting.

Oh you seeker who desires generosity and who  
wears out the old camels by tiring them . . . .

(1) *Meaning* come to the court of the "Imam", you will find

(2) *Meaning* al-askari; 1/45



generosity which is sufficient for all seekers (1)  
throughout the length and breadth of the world".

The modern reader might think ill of such ideas and might dismiss them out of hand as rubbish and disgusting chatter. But whether we like it or not, it was indispensable to eulogy at the time when the poet lived.

Al-Buhturi, it is to be emphasized, strictly adhered to what al-Jahidh called "adaptation of contents to audience". He was successful in realizing the particular morals and qualities which were applicable to his various patrons. The Caliphs were always described as "the faithful guardians of Islam", "the strict adherents of justice" and other epithets. The Wezirs were truthful to their lords, elegant and impartial; the soldiers and governors were praised for qualities appertaining to the war and administration.

(2)  
In al-Askari's opinion "the best praise is that which contains unfamiliar ideas which have never been employed before". To estimate the values of al-Buhturi's praise in the light of this view would be to underestimate it. The ideas themselves were certainly familiar to all encomiasts. What they constantly endeavoured to do was merely to handle these ideas in a way which would win

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(1) Diwan; 1/13

(2) Diwan al-Ma'ani; 1/45



admiration. Al-Buhturi, however, was the unsurpassed master who achieved in his eulogies unrivalled style. His productions, as well as those of his contemporaries were a great factor in stimulating "Kudama" to classify praise in accordance with the class of men, high or low, Bedounin or city dwellers as has been mentioned before. Al-Buhturi's greatness lies in the accuracy with which he adapted his ideas to the particular taste of the person to whom his eulogy was addressed. (1) He poured his contempt on his slave. (2) Some of the poets lampooned their relatives, their fathers and their mothers. They even lampooned their wives and themselves. Al-Zuhayr, as is known, lampooned his mother, his father and his wife. (3) Nearly all the Abbasid poets practised satire and some of them produced nothing else. Few of them, however, lampooned their relatives. Abul-Hasan Ali Ibn Sallan, generally known by the surname of al-Sassani, was particularly noted for the keenness of his tongue and his natural turn for satire; none indeed could outstep him.

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(1) Ibn Sallan, Tabakat: 117

(2) Ashshir: 177

(3) Dawa al-Ma'ani: 1/39. Kamil: 1/153. Ashshir: 132

(4) Ibid: 1/154

(5) Ma'ani al-Sassani: 1/39



princes and nobles, high or low, may even his own father, brothers and other Satire. of his family had to suffer from his attack.

To his father he addressed the following lines:-  
Poets throughout the Islamic Umayyad and early Abbasid eras produced satire abundantly. It is strange to see some of them lampooning their tribes, a shameful and disgraceful practice. (1) Al-Ra'i (1) lampooned his tribe (2) bitterly and "al-Shammakh" (2) poured his contempt on his clan. (3) Some of the poets lampooned their relatives, their fathers and their mothers. They even lampooned their wives and themselves. Al-Hutay'a, as is known, lampooned his mother, his father and his wife. (3) (4) Nearly all the Abbasid poets practised satire and some of them produced nothing else. (5) Few of them, however, lampooned their relatives. Abul-Hasan Ali Ibn Bassam, generally known by the surname of al-Bassami . . . . . was particularly noted for the keenness of his tongue and his natural turn for satire; none indeed could escape him,

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(1) Ibn Sallam, Tabakat; 117

(2) Ashshir; 177

(3) Diwan al-Ma'ani; 1/39. Kamil; 1/153. Ashshir; 182

(5) Ibid; 1/140

(6) Ma'ahid al-Tanzis; 1/81



princes and wezirs, high or low, nay even his own father, brothers and other members of his family had to suffer from his attack. As has been said before, To his father he addressed the following lines:--  
"Were you to live the lives of twenty eagles;  
do you think I could die and let you survive?  
If I outlive you a single day, I shall show my  
grief by rending the bosom of Thy purse".<sup>(1)</sup>  
Dik al-Jin lampooned himself while Ibn Abi Uyayna directed<sup>(2)</sup>  
most of his satire against his cousin.<sup>(3)</sup> It was the fashion among the masters of satire to keep their odes short. This plan was favoured by all poets except Jarir who advised his sons to "make their satire as long as possible".<sup>(4)</sup> The only poet who followed this<sup>(5)</sup> method was Ibn al-Rumi who, moreover, employed vulgarity. Only a small quantity of al-Buhturi's satire survived. The reason was that "he collected all of his "Hija'"<sup>(6)</sup> before his death and burnt it".

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- (1) Wafayat (English version); 2/301. and Fawat; 2/105. Zahr al-Adab; 3/88  
(2) Diwan al-Ma'ani; 1/144  
(3) Agh; 18/9  
(4) al-Umdah; 2/140  
(5) Ibid; 1/140  
(6) Ma'ahid al-Tansis; 1/81



Before proceeding to illustrate the characteristics of the Hija, it is interesting to notice that a few poets directed their satire against animals. As has been said before, the poets who had no contact with the court produced very very pleasing poetry which shows their spontaneity and a high degree of emancipation from the trammels of traditions. Two examples might serve to support this fact.

"Muhammad Ibn Bashir was a miser. He had in front of his house a garden the size of which was that of four bricks which he had taken from his house and in it he planted a pomegranate and a pleasant palm-tree and some vegetables around it. A sheep belonging to his neighbour whose name was "Mani" got free from its tether, ate the vegetables and chewed the leaves of the palm-tree. She went into his house and found nothing except papers on which were written his poetry and some others of his records". He said all the lampooning her:

"I have a garden which is charming, and of pleasing verdure, luxuriant and well tended. Its roots are firm and its land is well watered. Its soil is plentifully watered and never dry. There are small channels for the water to flow. However you direct the water in them thus it flows. They will earn money and breed through her.



Keep it safe, oh my Lord, from one thing then I shall not trouble myself about any other kind of destruction. I say her neighbour's children Keep it safe from the sheep of "Mani" alone on the day when there is no fodder in Mani's house. Preserve it from that brown sneezing creature on whom is bestowed madness in addition to an evil life. Her hooves are always tired for her masters do not clean them. You see this in the dry imprint of every hind-leg and fore-leg which they leave on the ground. She disturbs the earth when she walks; she Abul-Shibl causes the dust to rise in whirls. "al-Adhha" You see no ram making for her. Contempt has once and been thrown at her by every ram. She is ugly of feature, no one from among all the and broke people has seen her without swearing that he has books and never seen a sheep, and has never previously before the known any created thing such as she. I am astounded at her and at her conformation. I am astonished at the disposition of her parts, as to how they are combined together. If they call out over her (that she is something extraordinary) they will earn money and breed through her.



May an ulcer make her to swell, causing her increasingly to waste away and become emaciated. May she die, and may her neighbour's children come to drag her into the place where the corpses of diseased animals are thrown. When they arrive at this place (may they) cover her with bricks and tar. Then they say to her "this is the punishment of one who eats up the garden and the manuscripts". <sup>(1)</sup> Do not blame, for even though I see all of that done to her, I could not think justice has been done".

Abul-Shibl al-Burjumi bought a ram for the feast of "al-Adhha", he fed it and fattened it. It broke loose once and went to a candle of his which he used to burn in front of him and a lamp and a jar of oil. It butted them and broke them. The oil spilled over his clothes, his books and his bed. When he saw that he slew the ram before the feast and made this lament:

"Oh eye, weep for the loss of a lamp which was a pillar of light and brightness. The well.

It was the finest thing of china when he who shapes beauty created it with its pictorial design. is in darkness because of (the dis-



It is said that "time caused an accident to be happen to it by the horns of a creature like a gazelle." - and since you left is without

It butted it with such force that nothing remained, but that it should come to the camp of the shattered army.

If it has departed, it has indeed left behind it a memory which will remain for all time.

Oh my lamp, if you could be ransomed, the hands of generosity would not be miserly with dinars for your sake. - among things I purchased a ran

Oh my lamp, how often have you dispersed the darkness and you cleared away the gloom (of the world) with light. - and the drops of pressed dates.

Who can help me when my companion goes to other companions in the shadow of darkness. - "And one rises to kiss another and to embrace yet another and none knows his neighbour lost together in in disorder. - And my companions broke up into couples in the darkness and naught was heard save (the sound of) the rope in the well.

They pray not when they are alone except the prayer which is performed without abruptions.

The house is in darkness because of (the disappearance) of your light, as is also the living



room, the kitchen, and the oven, and also the porch and the reception room. of him who seeks The court-yard since you left is without inhabitation. evetional offering, but I do not think the owner in dividing your flesh will receive the reward of God".

Two court poets are to be considered here, namely, Di'bil al-Khamsa's "Stop thinking of it and lampoon the horns of the and Ibn al- one that butted it and treat of its story in part of his detail. developed a new approach in other parts.

My story is that among things I purchased a ram whose grandfather is a pig.

I did not cease to fatten him with palm kernels, hay, luzern grass and the dregs of pressed dates. I cooled its drinking water with jars and guarded it from every dangerous thing.

He rushed against it (the lamp) with the horns of viciousness which are accustomed to and famous for butting. No solid mountain from all the high mountains which are known is strong enough to withstand its onslaught.

How then can a lamp stand against it which is more delicate than jewels.

Oh ram, behold you have broken my lamp, taste from the knife of death the cup of slaughter.



Tyrannously you sought to do evil, and the seeking of evil, on the part of him who seeks ill for his people, is death.

(You are) a devotional offering, but I do not think the owner in dividing your flesh will receive the reward of God".<sup>(1)</sup>

Two court poets are to be considered here, namely, Di'bil al-Khuza'i who represented the traditional class of satire and Ibn al-Rumi who, though he was conventional in some part of his poetry, developed a new approach in other parts.

His tongue never seemed to be a source of fear to (other people) and he was fearful of the effect of his satire upon the caliph. He spent all of his life in fleeing and hiding".

Although al-Ma'mun rewarded him generously, he lampooned him bitterly after his death.<sup>(2)</sup> Al-Ma'mun was also the victim of a disgusting satire, though he had granted him protection. It was not an accident that al-Ma'mun protected the poet and tolerantly heard his satire. The reason was that Di'bil was considered to be the defender of the allies. He was an earnest Shi'ite and supported his

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(1) Agh; 13/27

(1) Tokut - Arabic; 4/194. Ibn 'Asbir; 5/234. Agh; 13/27. Hafez (English version); 1/507. Ma'ahid al-Tamim; 1/202

(2) Agh; 13/29

(3) Agh; 13/27

(4) Ma'ahid al-Tamim; 1/202



Di'bil al-Khuza'i

"Di'bil was an eminent and natural poet of an evil tongue. None of the Caliphs nor the ministers nor their children nor even well known men, whether they favoured him with their bounties or whether they did not, were safe from him. There was between him and "al-Kumait Ibn Zaid" and "Abu Sa'id al-Makhzumi" a mutual rivalry in lampooning one another".<sup>(1)</sup>

"His tongue never ceased to be a source of fear to (other people) and he was fearful of the effect of his satire upon the Caliphs. He spent all of his life in fleeing and hiding".<sup>(2)</sup>

Although al-Rashid rewarded him generously, he lampooned him bitterly after his death.<sup>(3)</sup> Al-Ma'mun was also the victim of a disgusting satire, though he had granted him protection.<sup>(4)</sup> It was not an accident that al-Ma'mun protected the poet and tolerantly heard his satire. The reason was that Di'bil was considered to be the defender of the Alids. He was an earnest Shi'ite and supported his

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(1) Yakut - Irshad; 4/194. Ibn 'Asakir; 5/234. Agh; 18/29. Wafayat (English version); 1/507. Ma'ahid al-Tansis; 1/202

(2) Agh; 18/29

(3) Agh; 18/57

(4) Zahr al-Adab; 1/133



sect in all his poetry. Al-Hasri said "he was an encomiast of the family of Ali and was fanatical in their support and extravagant in their praise".<sup>(1)</sup> The Caliphs realized how influential Di'bil was among the Shi'ites and consequently made no serious attempt to punish him. Di'bil was, from the early days of his life, a wicked and adventurous man. "He used to live by brigandage in his youth and to practise burglary against people. He once killed a money-changer thinking that his wallet was with him, but he found in his pocket only a pomegranate."<sup>(2)</sup> This accident caused his flight from Kufa". Another anecdote shows how friendly was he with the brigands who used to trust him and to enjoy his company. "Di'bil used to go away and remain absent for many years, wandering round the world. Then he would return having made great profit and being very rich. The brigands and vagabonds used to meet him and drink with him and do him favours".<sup>(3)</sup> A friend once said to him, "Woe unto you, you have lampooned the Caliphs, the ministers and the governors and antagonized all the people. You spend all of your time in flight and in fear. Why do you not give this up and

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(1) Zahr al-Adab; 1/133. Raudat al-Jannat; 277

(2) Agh; 18/35

(3) Agh; 18/36

(4) Safayat (English version); 1/507. Agh; 18/34



turn this evil away from yourself." He said, ". . . I have thought over what you say and I have found that there is no profit in the majority of people unless you give them cause to fear you. No attention will be paid to a poet even though he be excellent if his evil (tongue) is not feared. Those who are wary in dealing with you on account of their honour are more than those who like you because you have honoured them. The reproaches of men are more than their noble deeds".<sup>(1)</sup>

It is indeed strange to see the poet busying himself composing satire and storing it until he found fitting opponents against whom to direct it. One of his friends said that "Di'bil used to recite much of his satire to me and I used to ask him, "about whom is this"? He replied, "no one person has deserved it as yet and it has no owner". Then if he took exception to a man he applied that poem to him and mentioned his name in it".<sup>(2)</sup>

Indeed there is no evidence which manifests his wickedness and evilness better than his words "for fifty years past I have gone about with my cross on my shoulder, but could find none to crucify me on it".<sup>(3)</sup>

Thus, Di'bil's poetry clearly reflects his evil and spiteful spirit. Vulgarity and obscenity characterize his satire

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(1) Agh; 18/31

(2) Agh; 18/33

(3) Wafayat (English version); 1/507. Agh; 18/34



throughout - a fact which makes him comparable to the outstanding Umayyad satirists. His favourite image was that of an obscene and shameless man. He lampooned "Ahmad Ibn Abi Du'ad" in these lines:

"He whose father is Du'ad . . . has stories to his name. His mother masturbated and his father indulged in homosexuality, would that I know from whence he came"?

When "Ahmad Ibn Abi Khalid" was a prime minister in the reign of al-Mamun Di'bil said:

"On occasion when Abu-Khalid gorged himself to helplessness, the repletion of his belly became tight for his progeny and he evacuated them one after the other. He filled the earth with his excrement (which were) black beetles which did not resemble their father".

A friend of his came back from pilgrimage and promised to give him a pair of slippers. He delayed in doing so and Di'bil wrote to him:

"You promise me a pair of slippers then you failed to give them to me, as if you desired insult and abuse from me. If you do not give me a نعل - a slipper - be that thing of which the letter after the ن of نعل is a غ - نعل - bastard."

(1) Agh; 18/41

(2) Agh; 18/40

(3) Tarikh Baghdad; 8/385



His way of insulting his opponents appealed to the mob who used to read his poetry avidly. Abu Said al-nakhzumi one of his contemporaries said "I composed good poetry and it was not recited. Di'bil composed bad poetry and it was recited. He disgraced me with his bad poetry but I do not disgrace him with my good poetry. I said about him:

"Silken robes are not apparel of braves, nor is being present on the field of battle like attendance at the assembly".

Nobody paid attention to these lines in this country except men of poetry. He said about me:

"Oh father of Said, oh pannier, you whose sister and wife are adulteresses. If you were to see him coming dressed in his garment you would imagine him to be a small bridge".

Abu Said added, "by God, these lines have been recited by kids, ~~and~~ way-farers and wicked people".

In his poetry, Di'bil never stressed the legitimacy of the Alid claims, nor the unlawful nature of the Abbasid Caliphate. He poured his contempt on al-Rashid, al-Ha'mun and al-Mu'tasim without direct allusion to this question.

In his very best ode which was directed to "Ali Ibn Musa 'al-Ridha'", he only portrayed the deplorable condition

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(1) Agh; 18/51. Ibn al-Mu'tazz, Tabakat Ashshu'ara; 140

(2) Yakut, Irshad; 4/194 - 195



of the Alids, their misfortunes and the ill treatment which they received from the Abbasids. But he was not courageous enough to make public their superior claim to the Caliphate. Al-Mutasim among the Caliphs received the most biting satire.

"The kings of the Abbasids are mentioned as seven in books and we have no mention of an eighth one. Thus it was with the sleepers in the cave, who were seven noble men when they were counted, the eighth being a dog".<sup>(1)</sup>

When Di'bil heard of al-Mutasim's death and the accession of al-Wathik he said:

"Praise be to God, there is no need for patience, nor a show of grief, nor is there any need for consolation when wicked people die.

A Caliph has died and none has grieved at his passing, another has come in his place and no one is joyful at his coming".<sup>(2)</sup>

Di'bil who escaped from the Abbasids was murdered because of his satire. These lines, it was said, caused him to be killed by "Malik Ibn Tawk" against whom they were directed.

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(1) Ashshir; 540

(2) Agh; 18/41. For the lampoon against other Caliphs see: Wafayat (English version); 1/508. Ashshir; 540.

(1) Agh; 18/50

(2) al-Jadid; 1/114. Mu'jam al-Shu'ara; 289



Thus, two types of satire are present in his poetry the first of which is comparable with that of M'bil while the other has peculiarities of its own. It is this latter

"I enquired after you, oh Beni Malik, in the far four parts of the earth and in the near. No one knew of your family at all until I asked after the sons of prostitutes. Then they said "pass the house on your right hand and the second house is theirs".<sup>(1)</sup>

great a development. As a master of sarcastic mockery he was unsurpassed; his manner was entirely his own.

"He was excessively superstitious about bad omens and he used to justify this by saying that "the prophet liked good omens and disliked bad ones. Do you think that he

used to attach significance to something as a good omen and not attach significance to its opposite?"<sup>(1)</sup>

On the other hand, he was very sensitive, "if he came upon a certain idea he was influenced by it deeply".<sup>(2)</sup>

Ibn al-Rumi was also distinguished for the bitterness of his attacks on his enemies. It is a fact that these two poets were past master of lampoon. Abul-Ala' coupled them together in a verse:<sup>(2)</sup>

Without humour satire is invective; without literary form it is mere clownish jeering. But Ibn al-Rumi possessed both humour and a high literary ability which made his satire effective. His humour, however, was that of an artist rather than of a clown. In this point he would be compared with the modern school of caricature.

They are alike in that they employed vulgarity and obscenity. But Ibn al-Rumi employed it in a lesser degree.

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(1) Agh; 18/60

(1) Zahr al-Adab; 2/192

(2) al-Umdah; 1/114. Mu'jam al-Shu'ara; 289

(2) Min Hadith al-Shir al-Nathr; 238



Thus, two types of satire are present in his poetry the first of which is comparable with that of Di'bil while the other has peculiarities of its own. It is this latter which will receive attention here.

Arabic literature had never before seen a satirist on the scale of Ibn al-Rumi, nor had satire ever received so great a development. As a master of sarcastic mockery he was unsurpassed; his manner was entirely his own.

"He was excessively superstitious about bad omens and he used to justify this by saying that "the prophet liked good omens and disliked bad ones. Do you think that he used to attach significance to something as a good omen (1) and not attach an evil significance to its opposite?"

On the other hand, he was very sensitive, "if he came upon a certain idea he was influenced by it deeply". (2) These factors in addition to his discontent with the people whom he so greatly scorned contributed to his satirical imagination.

Without humour satire is invective; without literary form it is mere clownish jeering. But Ibn al-Rumi possessed both humour and a high literary ability which made his satire effective. His humour, however, was that of an artist rather than of a clown. In this point he could be compared with the modern school of caricature.

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(1) Encyclopaedia Britannica (Satire, Caricature)  
Chamber's Encyclopaedia; (Caricature)

(1) Zahr al-Adab; 2/192

(2) Min Hadith al-Shir Wal-Nathr; 238



Caricature although it originated in drawing has come nowadays to be associated with literature. It is, however, considered as a branch of satire and the word is equally used to express either a pictorial or a descriptive representation in which, while a general likeness is retained, peculiarities are exaggerated so as to make the person or thing ridiculous. <sup>(1)</sup> This technique, therefore, depends on finding peculiarities together with an exaggeration of them. Ibn al-Rumi was so alert in depicting such peculiarities that he became a master of the caricature. Here are a few examples:

"I never thought that man could be a ruminant  
until you became that animal in reality". <sup>(2)</sup>

"Your nose always reflects your head in its  
great size. Because your nose is like that,  
the elephant in comparison with you has a flat  
nose.  
If you were to sit by the road and I do not  
think you will sit thus, people would say,  
peace be unto the two of you. You would reply  
while your nose would be dumb". <sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Encyclopaedia Britannica (Satire. Caricature)  
Chamber's Encyclopaedia; (Caricature)

(2) Diwan; 378

(3) Diwan; 91



"If a beard grows long and wide on your face, indeed the feeding-bags are associated with donkeys. God hung a feeding-bag on your two cheeks but it is without barley. If its destiny were in my hands how it would fly away in the blowing wind". (1)

"If you meet a bearded man whose beard covers his chest by reason of its volume. Grasp at it at its roots with your left hand and put the razor on his throat. If you fear God in no matter the killing him or if you fear violent resistance, jump on his chin plucking out its hairs - hair by hair". (2) the stature and the physique of the individuals lampooned rather than with their moral

qualities: "Isa is a miser to himself although he will not live for ever nor is he immortal. So miserly is he that were he able, he would breathe through one nostril". (3) high degree of perfection in this technique to make it popular. It

"Time increased my unhappiness in Baghdad, and the traveller might be unhappy or fortunate, I remained in it in spite of disliking it, like an impotent man being embraced by an old woman". (4)

- 
- (1) Ibid; 71  
 (2) Ibid; 287  
 (3) ~~Diwan~~; SINA'ATIN, 80  
 (4) Diwan; 111



"Your face, Oh Amr, is long and there is length in the faces of dogs. The dog is faithful in discharging its obligations and you are dishonest. In comparison with his high standard you are low. He might guard flocks but you neither guard them nor fight in their defence".<sup>(1)</sup>

"A ruminant man", "a nose as big as the head", "beard like a feeding-bag", "breathing through one nostril" and the like are new expressions in satire. They fulfil Ibn al-Rumi's purpose, namely, to make the hearer laugh no matter whether he be a friend or an enemy to the person involved. These expressions, however, are connected with the description of the stature and the physique of the individuals lampooned rather than with their moral qualities; this is exactly the procedure of the caricaturists.

Ibn al-Rumi, unfortunately, stands alone in such a method. Moreover, he did not reach a sufficiently high degree of perfection in this technique to make it popular. It lapsed when he died, and is seldom to be found in later satire.

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(1) Diwan; 15

(1) Agb (K); 8/352

(2) Agb (K); 8/353



Al-Mubarrid was probably alluding exclusively to the difference between Love-poetry and "al-Abbas" in stressing that the latter was "a profligate".

Poets, besides opening panegyric with love, produced many independent odes on this theme.

Bashshar, Abul-Atahiya, Abu-Nuwas and Ibn al-Ahnaf are outstanding among the poets of this era. nearly all of them

It is convenient to study two poets only because they represented different schools and devised new approaches, namely, al-<sup>2</sup>Abbas Ibn al-Ahnaf and Abu-Nuwas. The former for women's love and the latter in connection with infatuation for young boys. convenience. Thus, Umar as he

portrayed himself throughout his poetry, was a profligate. His main motive Al-<sup>2</sup>Abbas Ibn al-Ahnaf was to satisfy his

physical demand. Once he got his desire the story was

"Al-<sup>2</sup>Abbas was an elegant and natural love poet . . . . He had a good technique. His poetic style was of great brilliance and his ideas were fresh and pleasant. He never abandoned "Ghazal" for eulogy or satire, nor did he associate with them in his poetry".<sup>(1)</sup>

Al-Mubarrid said, "he was one of the elegant poets but he was not a libertine. He was a love poet but was no<sup>(2)</sup> profligate".

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(1) Agh (K); 8/352

(2) Agh (K); 8/353



Al-Mubarrid was probably alluding exclusively to the difference between "Umar Ibn Abi Rabi'a" and "al-Abbas" in stressing that the latter was "so profligate". Umar recorded the devices by which he used to engineer meetings between himself and women of his acquaintances and also the technique which he used in seducing them. Many women appeared to have attracted him and nearly all of them ultimately became infatuated with him. He very often mentioned the messenger and the profitable results of her negotiations with his mistress - results such as a meeting successfully brought about or a promise to arrange for meeting him at the earliest convenience. Thus, Umar as he portrayed himself throughout his poetry, was a profligate. His main motive for seeking women was to satisfy his physical demand. Once he got his desire the story was finished. Critics bitterly criticized his method and particularly condemned him for portraying himself as a champion who never suffered or found it difficult to get a woman, because women always succumbed to his charms. (1) With al-Abbas we face a completely different case. His various poems show a comprehensive picture of the cause of love. "In the beginning and at first sight, the poet is overwhelmed by passion. He starts wooing, at first

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(1) al-Umdah; 2/99 of his letters.

Kamil; 1/333  
(1) Ishtaki; Vol. II, 1926



diffidently, then more boldly. We then follow his association (personal and by correspondence) with his lady-love. From his exultation and complaints we gather that there has been a climax. Soon there is a relapse, there are misunderstandings, physical distance intervenes. Finally he realizes that his beloved is no longer interested in him. All he can do is to complain, to hope, to endure, to resign himself, and to proclaim his unchanging loyalty again and again<sup>(1)</sup>. This procedure recurs almost invariably in his odes and particularly in his correspondence.

His sweet-heart was one known as "Fawz" a name which occurs very frequently in his poetry. He sometimes called her "Dhalum".

His odes were short, seldom more than twenty lines. This shortness seems to be due to the fact that most of his odes have been written to serve as messages to his friend "Fawz" or as replies to her letters.

He was excellent in portraying the messenger and the way of delivering his correspondence. In more than forty odes, he mentioned different aspects of his correspondence, his fear of the watchers and the like. Here are a few examples to illustrate the theme of his letters.

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(1) Islamica; Vol. II, 1926



"How long shall I complain of love while you are ungenerous in giving me an answer.

If you do not answer me about what I desire, then at least inform me that you have received my letter".<sup>(1)</sup>

"I wrote to Dhalum and she did not reply to me.

She said, "I have no answer for him".

When my soul despaired and the slanderers were careless, I received a letter from her. A even letter came to me while the watchers were around me, if a bird passed over me they became suspicious".<sup>(2)</sup>

"I wrote my letter (to her) and I was not able to form its letters (properly) because of the violence of my weeping and the extent of my sighing.

I wrote and erased what I had written with my tears which flowed on the paper like water.

Oh Fawz, if you could see me you would not recognize me because of the extent of my emaciation because of you and my pallor".<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Diwan; 18

(2) Ibid; 17

(3) Diwan; 5



"I used to blame you during the time when my nights with you were sweet to the taste and you listen to my blaming.

In the days when a girl wearing ear-rings with "Kuhl" in her eyes, and her hands dyed with "Hinna" carried our messages between us".

He frequently mentioned the watchers and their malicious behaviour in diffusing slanders and seeking faults for exaggeration. They deprived him of his enjoyment with his beloved. The only occasion on which he was able, even briefly, to look at her, was when the slanderers were busy.

"On the day of the funeral, had you been present to see me, my eyes were delighted by the sight of her and seldom it is that my eyes are delighted.

I went out, and I knew nothing of this, would that I was the bier and she were among those who followed".

(1) Islamiya II, 1926

(2) Ash (X), 8/772

(3) Ash (X), 8/762

hope, as if I were a nail in the door of the house.

Long did I stand there, although I did not hope to see her come forth. Yet I was gazing towards the door".

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(1) Ibid; 23  
(2) Ibid; 99  
(3) Diwan; 64



His language all through is very simple and intelligible. Prof. Hell maintained that "the style of al-Abbas, his simple vocabulary and certain awkward phrases show that his native language was not Arabic but Persian."<sup>(1)</sup>

The discerning reader is unlikely to agree with this opinion. What is meant by "awkward phrases" is vague and in no way acceptable. The poet was born in Baghdad and settled down in "Khurasan" after which he came back to Baghdad where he was a comrade of the Caliph "al-Rashid".<sup>(2)</sup> His language whether in Baghdad or Khurasan was Arabic, and according to the Arab authorities it was eloquent. It was highly admired by "al-Kindi", and Ibrahim al-Mawsili. The latter although strict and fond of the old language,<sup>(3)</sup> sang many of his odes.

Two factors seemed to have governed his poetry and consequently to have made simplicity inevitable. The first was his subject matter and the second his correspondence.

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(1) Islamica II, 1926

(2) Agh (K); 8/372. Huart; Arabic literature; 70 - 71

(3) Agh (K); 8/362

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(1) Persian (English version); 2/7



Al-Abbas confined his poetry to love and never went beyond it. It was, therefore, natural to expect simplicity, clarity and passion - the distinctive characteristics of love.

His poetry, on the other hand, was his medium of correspondence with his friend - a procedure which could in no way be achieved without simplicity and brevity. These two factors alone contributed to his language and in them one should seek the reasons for simplicity rather than in anything else.

The following verses may serve as an example of his pathetic style.

"Desist, self-tormentor! Thus only can Thy woes be healed. Thy eyes have exhausted their tears in weeping; try then to find others shedding copious drops, and with them recruit the last of Thine. But who would lend Thee his eyes that Thou mayest weep with them? Were eyes ever lent that their tears might be shed?"

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(1) Wafayat (English version); 2/7  
It is to be stressed before going any further that one

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(1) Agh: 13/73. 12/105



should treat with some suspicion, what has been said about  
Baghdad in the days of Abu-Nuwas. They cannot be

regarded as typical of the morals of Baghdad society. It

It was not Abu-Nuwas alone who led in Baghdad a life of  
immorality such as had never previously been known.

He was but one of a large group. "Kufa", in turn, was for  
some times a good shelter for libertines and men of doubtful  
morals. Outstanding among them were the three Hammads,

namely: Hammad Ajrad, Hammad the reciter and Hammad

(1) al-Zabrikan. Among the group at Baghdad al-Husain Ibn  
al-Dhahhak, al-Fadhl al-Rakkashi, and Isma'il al-Karatisi  
were eminent.

These poets were immoral and profligate in that their loves  
and passions were of a transitory nature. Their interest  
in women was purely physical and their love-poems, while  
often of considerable warmth, were purely materialistic.  
Their real interest was in young boys - a preference which  
they made obvious.

These men were, psychologically speaking, rebels against  
the morals of the community. They, however, found a  
satisfactory refuge in leading a life of extreme  
eccentricity. They were, one might say, the counter type  
of Abul-Atahiya and his followers who found refuge in  
Sufism - another extreme.

It is to be stressed before going any further that one



should treat with some suspicion, what has been said about Baghdad in the days of these poets. They cannot be regarded as typical of the morals of Baghdad society. It would give a false idea if we were to estimate the moral standards of the community by them.

These persons successfully recorded their own experiences and the results of their morals. If we are willing to base our judgements on the literary records of certain isolated individuals, we would have to accept what they have told us about Baghdad during this period. Otherwise, however, one would wish to study evidence from other sources, before coming to a decision.

Abu-Nuwas, despite the fact that many anecdotes and even odes were falsely attributed to him, was a profligate. Besides wine, pederasty played the main part in his life. His poetry forms a very clear picture of the low standard of his morals. He was the first poet who mentioned (1) masturbation in his poetry. He, however, was the pioneer who popularized poetry about young boys. The ancients wept on the ruined encampments but he who ridiculed this manner, found it worthy to weep on wine and young boys.

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(1) Akhbar Abi Nuwas; 110 206. 217. 250.



Abul-Atani "(Give me wine) from the hands of an attractive  
more fitting boy whose figure is pleasant, as if he were a  
virgin to the eye. Atani, that I will leave

I have wept for him as a man weeps over  
(1)  
separation and ruined encampments".

Abu-Nuwas was infatuated with boys just as other men were  
infatuated with young girls. When he saw a handsome youth,  
he chased him, planning to meet him in order that they might  
drink together and that his story might start afresh.  
(2)

It was not without an attempt to justify himself by grossly  
misinterpreting a Koranic verse that Abu-Nuwas indulged in  
such an evil.

"The Book of God enjoins this upon us;  
(3)  
preference for boys over girls".

He was so profligate that his people made him marry a young  
girl but he divorced her on the first night and went out to  
his boys. He addressed his bride:

"Be not distraught, oh woman of the garment, but  
support your divorce and depart.

Be calm for how many chaste and beautiful women  
like you have been of those whom I have not  
(4)  
desired".

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(1) Diwan; 235 - 236

(2) Akhbar; 138 - 140. Diwan; 206. 217. 260.

(3) Ibid; 107

(4) Akhbar; 107



Abul-Atahiya advised him to give up this way and to seek a more fitting way, and he wrote to him:

"Would you think, oh Atahi, that I will leave these diversions.

Would you think that I will injure my reputation among the beardless boys by leading an ascetic (1) life".

He practised what he preached and hypocrisy at any rate (2) cannot be laid to his charge. Usually he felt and avowed that pleasure was the supreme business of his life, and that religious scruples could not be permitted to stand in the way.

"The most enjoyable diversions are those which (3) are not followed in public".

Young boys, however, worried him throughout his life and occupied most of his time.

"Give me the cups of enjoyment that I may not hear the crying of the Mu'addin. Give me the (4) wine to drink in public . . . . .".

He has, however, given us some curious accounts of the life which was led by the Mu'addin. (5) "Drink, may I be your ransom, in public for the mother of drinking in secret is a whore".

(1) Ibid; 353

(2) Waseeth; 11

(1) Akhbar; 144

(2) Nicholson, Literary History; 295

(3) Diwan; 263

(4) Ibid; 340

(5) Diwan; 348



(1)  
"Do not partake of enjoyment secretly but come  
exactly like a horse without a halter". (1) (2)

There were places in "al-Karkh" where these boys gathered  
together in order to solicit.

"Tell me the name of him whom I love and cease  
this hinting. There is no good in enjoyment if  
it is secret". (2)

Abu-Nawas, we are told, loved "Inan" a slave girl of  
"al abdul Wahhab" and neglected no way of winning her  
affection. His attempt, however, came to naught. His  
earnest attempts such as going to "Mekka" to perform the  
pilgrimage at the same time that she had gone, and many  
odes which were addressed to her suggested his sincerity  
and genuineness. No other woman, though he addressed  
himself to many, seems to have affected him profoundly.  
Young boys, however, worried him throughout his life and  
occupied most of his poetry. (3)

His passion and grief for boys reflect his complete divorce  
from the world of femininity.

He has, however, given us some curious accounts of the life  
which was led by the libertines of Baghdad.

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(3) Diwan; 273

(1) Ibid; 353

(2) Wasatah; 117

(3) Diwan; 342



(1)  
Most of the "boys" were Persians. They sometimes dressed  
exactly like women and even used make-up and ~~used~~ perfume. (2)  
There were places in "al-Karkh" where these boys gathered  
together in order to solicit. Women always seem to lead  
these boys and to manage them. (3)  
A great deal could be said about such an inclination which  
existed not only in Abu-Nawas but also in others. It  
cannot be overlooked or neglected for its literary value  
is high in that it produced a literary form and expressed  
genuine passion. He said, "at one time we used  
critics, as we will see, occasionally tackled this subject  
but assessed it morally rather than aesthetically."

between the two".  
Indeed, it was the hope of getting reward which was the  
main motive for praise. The more money the poet received  
the more his art was appreciated. Aschshar was asked, "Why  
is your praise of 'Uthayb ibn Munir' better than any of the  
others?" He said, "that is because he gives me more than  
(3)

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(1) Diwan; 353

(2) Ibid; 354

(3) Diwan; 273  
of the poets on the one hand, and on  
the other, the formal ones about their patrons.

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(1) Ashshar; 543. Agh; 15/170

(2) Agh; 3/194



Nearly all poets tackled the subject but none of them were outstanding in Elegy.

Bashshar lamented the death of several persons, of a member of his family and his son. The elegy concerning his son was the best. Few elegies were composed, for two reasons. The dead would not reward and their successors who were also their enemies, did not like to hear the praise of those they had murdered. (2)

Al-Khuraimi was told "your praise of Benu Ma'nсур is far better than your elegy". He said, "at one time we used to compose in hope of reward, but now we compose to discharge an obligation and there is a vast difference (1) between the two".

Indeed, it was the hope of getting reward which was the main motive for praise. The more money the poet received the more his zest was aroused. Bashshar was asked, "why is your praise of 'Ukbah Ibn Muslim' better than any of the others"? He said, "that is because he gives me more than the others". (2) This material motive explains the absence of elegy.

Elegy can be divided into two parts, that which was written about the relatives of the poets on the one hand, and on the other, the formal ones about their patrons.

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(1) Ashshir; 543. Agh; 18/170

(2) Agh; 3/194



Nearly all poets tackled the two types but none of them were outstanding in the latter.

Bashshar lamented the death of several patrons, of a number of his family and his son. The elegy concerning his son was excellent; that over his daughter was inferior in imagery and intensity of grief. (1) We have two elegies about his two brothers, each of them containing description of love and wine - a very unusual practice in elegy. (2)

From among his patrons, "Abu-Ja'far Amr Ibn HafS" who was known "Hizarimard", (3) received the most moving elegy. (4)

Elegies about other patrons, although few in number, demonstrated Bashshar's psychophancy.

Abu-Nuwas lamented al-Rashid, al-Amin and several Barmakids. His lamentation over al-Amin, who seems to have affected him profoundly, shows deep grief and distinct passion. (5)

Strange as it seems, Abu-Nuwas lamented his master "Khalaf al-Ahmar" while the latter was alive. He read the ode and approved it greatly. (6) His elegy on "Abul Baida' al-Rabahi"

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(1) Khalidiyan; 471, Agh; 3/161

(2) Agh; 3/131

(3) A Persian word means (a thousand men).

(4) Bayan; 1/162. 2/167

(5) Diwan; 129

(6) Ibid; 132

(4) Udaab' al-Arab; 104



- his rawi - was characterized by awkward words. Indeed, all of Abu-Nuwas' elegies excluding that on al-Amin are alike. This is probably due to his desire to demonstrate his comprehensive knowledge and capability in language (1) rather than a desire to record his grief. Few elegies exist in Ibn al-Rumi's diwan. Some of them are well constructed and of high sentiment. That which he wrote for his son was extremely admired by the critics. (2) One cannot escape the conclusion that "Ibn al-Rumi" had imitated Bashshar's elegy written to record a similar loss; both sons were named "Muhammad". Abu-Tammam who excelled in his praise for the Abbasids, could not conceal his hypocritical attitude. He praised al-Ma'mun, and produced the most elegant and excellent panegyric on al-Mu'tasim but he did not lament them. He recorded the murder of al-Mu'tasim only in a few lines in an ode which was addressed to al-Wathik on his accession. (3) Some scholars maintained that the poet was a Shi'ite, and that for this reason he was not concerned about the Abbasids and that he did not find them worthy of elegy. His motive for praising them was like that of the other poets - a pecuniary one. (4)

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- (1) Umara' al-Shir; 86  
(2) Diwan Ibn al-Rumi  
(3) Diwan Abu-Tammam; 275  
(4) Uda'ba' al-Arab; 104



Be that as it may, his lamentations over his brother-in-law "al-Fusi" were unique. Profound grief and genuine affection were enriched by expressive diction.

Here are several lines of one ode:

"Verily the calamity is a great one, and the mishap is heavy; there is no excuse for the

eye which does not shed tears.

All desires have died after the death of

Muhammad, and those who were ready to travel

became unable to travel.

He was the sole fortune of the unfortunate and the treasure of him who has no treasure.

A hero died among the thrusts and blows, a death which stands in the place of victory, though he did not attain the victory.

He did not die until the blade of his sword died from the blows, and the spears were sad for him.

Benn Nabhan in the day of his death are like the stars without the moon.

They are consoled for one who has passed.

Dignity is in need of consolation for him, and fortitude, generosity, and poetry should weep for him<sup>(1)</sup>.

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(1) Diwan; 368

(3) Ibid; 387



Abu-Tammam's formal elegies, although of a hypocritical nature, were considered perfect in the judgement of the critics. (1) He made much of the sadness engendered by a contemplation of the personal belongings and effects of the deceased, and personified generosity as being without a patron. Here are a few examples:-

"The sword after your death burned (with grief) and wept; and hereditary glory wept bitterly. (lit. burned with thirst).

With you, noble lineage and intelligence will disappear and the helmets will remain smooth and unnotched.

He is a lion, if any other lion rises in his stead to attack the enemy, then it is but a coward and a weakling". (2)

The deceased, moreover, was always portrayed as "a lion", "a brother of generosity", and the like.

"I said (to him) while tears of sorrow and joy were flowing, and their flowing scored my two cheeks: "Are you not a long time dead, oh brother of generosity"? He said to me, "he has not died whose generosity has not died". (3)

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(1) al-Umdah; 2/119

(2) Diwan; 376

(3) Ibid; 387



Al-Buhturi caused a dispute among the critics. Some of them maintained that he was an extreme flatterer while the others found him truthful. The reader of his elegies is likely to agree with the former school. Although he produced more than twenty odes in praise of "al-Fath Ibn Khakan", he did not record his murder. On the other hand, he did not lament any Caliph, except al-Mutawakkil, although he witnessed the death of many. His lamentation over "al-Mutawakkil" was appreciated by some critics who claimed it to be his masterpiece. One cannot escape the conclusion that the ode was esteemed beyond its real merit.

Al-Buhturi tells us in the Kasida that he is trying to defend his master when his murderers attack him but "how could it be possible for an unarmed man to defeat the enemies". "Had I had my sword in my hand, the ruthless attackers would have seen how I would have fought them".<sup>(1)</sup> This was not true. What al-Buhturi tells us is merely boasting and exaggeration. He, we know, escaped from the Turks who murdered the Caliph and his brave Wezir "al-Fath Ibn Khakan" only because he hid himself in the closet.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Diwan; 28. Zahr al-Adab; 1/261

(2) Zahr al-Adab; 1/261

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(1) Kamil; 2/311. Zahr al-Adab; 1/261



It is interesting to point out that "Yazid al-Muhallabi" has recorded the same event. His ode, in its imagery and treatment of subject is similar to that of al-Buhturi. It, however, was neglected by the critics and seldom mentioned. It starts with the lines:

"There is no grief that I can see which is  
greater than that which I suffer. Is there a  
loss equal to what my eyes have lost.  
Had my sword and my brain been present to help  
him, I would have exhausted my energy (in his  
defence) but behold there was none to fight on  
his behalf.

His death came while the eyes (of his guardians)  
slept, would that his death had come to him  
while spears were being broken in battle.  
Would that his enemies had attacked him openly  
while war was fighting and heroes were struggling  
He fell murdered beneath the crown of state; his  
kingship did not defend him when his term expired  
The poet was courageous in blaming the Abbasids who trusted  
their enemies and neglected their people. It was during  
the culmination of the power of the Turks in Baghdad that  
the poet composed his ode. He should have known how risky  
and dangerous it was to decry the Turks or deprecate them,



but unlike al-Buhturi, he disregarded the consequences of such an action.

"The martyr of the Abbasids became a warning to everyone of dignity and pride (in his head).

When you have trusted people who have no loyalty you are lost and you lack those on whom to rely.

Had you bestowed your favour on honourable men, those of known worth would have defended you.

They are men of your stock and pedigree, of your dignity, religion, kinship and love".

Those who maintained al-Buhturi's genuineness put forward an excuse for his attitude towards his patrons after their death. Most of his patrons, they alleged, were involved in serious political rivalries. The poet praised them so long as they were in power in order to get reward. It would have been silly of him to associate himself with any political movement which might have led to the murder of any one of his patrons. One would have expected him in recording their death to have mentioned the manoeuvres of their opponents who succeeded to the throne. Had he done so, however, he himself would certainly have been put to death. On the other hand, these scholars maintained that



his elegies over the leaders and soldiers who were aloof from politics, were magnificent particularly those on "Abu-Sa'id al-Thaghri" and his son.

His elegies in this respect were better than his praise and the poet himself made this fact clear. He was asked once why his elegies over "Abu-Sa'id" were better than his praise and he replied, "in order to prove loyalty, elegy (1) should surpass praise".

These lines from his elegy on Abu-Sa'id are outstanding:

"Oh occupant of the grave, dwelling in a place where there is no room in its two compartments for a companion.

It is a grave above which the tawny spears have been broken for grief, and the banners have been rent.

(2) It is full of generosity, and the passing of rainless clouds does it no harm.

Unto you, oh ally of generosity and unto generosity - two noble deceased - a greeting and peace.

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(1) Agh; 18/170

(2) Agh; 18/170

(3) Agh; 17/19

(4) Agh; 17/19. al-Judah; 2/86



Dik al-Ji You were death unto the enemy, and I did not  
mention fear that death should come to death.  
I never thought that disaster would overtop your  
former glory nor did I think that your domain would be  
(1)  
Dik was wrested from you". all of his life in "Hims".  
It was a moderate Shi'ite and composed a number of elegies  
on al-Husain. His best elegy was over his wife "Hadi".  
Among the poets who recorded the death of their relatives  
"Ya'kub Ibn al-Rabi'" was eminent. He loved a slave girl  
and tried in every way known to him to win her.  
Unfortunately, she lived only a few months after he gained  
her affection. Her death affected him so deeply that he  
lamented her in many odes and cut himself off from every  
enjoyment of life. (2)  
Al-Mubarrid recorded four elegies to demonstrate the poet's  
grief, and the extremity of his emotion. Al-Mubarrid also  
extended his praise to several other poets among them  
"Ibrahim Ibn al-Mahdi" who lamented his son, Muhammad Ibn  
Abdul Malik al-Zayyat, who wept for the death of his wife  
and "Ibn Munadir" who wrote an elegy on his friend  
(3)  
"al-Thakafi".

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(1) Diwan; 2/57

(2) Kamil; 2/310

(3) Kamil; 2/263 - 286. Agh; 17/19. al-Umdah; 2/86



Dik al-Jin from among the informal elegists deserves the mention here. Ibn Rashik found him comparable to Abu-Nuwas. The latter excelled in wine poetry while the (1) former excelled in elegy.

Dik was a Syrian, and lived all of his life in "Hims". He was a moderate Shi'ite and produced a number of elegies on al-Husain. His best elegy was over his wife "Ward". "Ward" was a Christian slave girl who lived with the poet for a long time. He was so affected by her charms that he asked her to embrace Islam in order to marry her. The girl did so and they enjoyed a happy married life. A cousin of Dik was aroused by his dislike for "Ward" and sought all means to disrupt the happiness of the couple. On one occasion "Dik" left "Hims" for a short visit to one of his patrons and his cousin took the opportunity of spreading many slanders against "Ward". She was accused of having loved her slave boy, and of having committed adultery with another man. Dik's cousin managed to insinuate these slanders into the ear of Dik, who departed from his patron and returned home at once. The air was full of slanders and Dik did not trouble himself to seek confirmation. As soon as he arrived at the house, his sword played the last act in the tragedy.

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(1) al-Umdah; 1/194



A long time after this sad event Dik discovered that the whole affair was a fabrication on the part of his cousin. So great was his grief that he devoted the rest of his life to lamenting her death.<sup>(1)</sup>

"Oh you who dwell in the pit, in the grave's depth. Oh you departed from your friends at the end of life span. Answer me if you are able to answer and swear by our love, have you been constant after me. Where have you dwelt after dwelling in my heart (in my belly, my ribs and my liver?). Indeed by God, if you could see my grief when I cry in the darkness, then indeed you would know that my grave is soon to be dug. The wicked man blamed me for crying, as if I alone were afflicted by love. He said, "you have killed her ruthlessly and wickedly, and you cry for her hopelessly. (You are) like the hunter of birds who cried for them while slaughtering them without pity".<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Agh; 12/142. al-Umdah; 1/119.

the Wafayat (English version); 1/408

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(2) Agh; 12/145

(1) Ijaz; 94



Summary.

The language of poetry, as we have seen, was studied by men of rigid and conventional ideas. The form and contents of poetry, however, was the province of critics whose attitude was more liberal.

So progressive was this attitude that they not only recognized merit in the Muwallads but also set out new literary canons which were largely independent of tradition. Nevertheless, despite this large measure of freedom which the critics allowed the poets, insistence upon the unity of rhyme and metre continued to be common.

Some of them even went so far as to declare that non-<sup>(1)</sup>conformity to this principle was a grave fault.

Naturally, the vast majority of the poets conformed. Those who did not, such as Abu-Huwas in a "Khumasiya" and Ibn al-Mutazz in a certain stanza, represented a particularly advanced element, who, however, were not successful in their efforts entirely to emancipate the form of the ode. "Tadhmin", however, appeared abundantly and in some odes the sense runs from one line to another.

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(1) Ijaz; 94



"Digression" from one subject to another which still in remains a primary requirement among the critics, was largely disregarded by the poets and survived only in the formal eulogy. (1)

"Exaggeration" and "strict adherence to the truth", both of which caused great controversy among the critics, were no longer considered to be shortcomings. general and often It was an old accusation that poets never expressed the truth. Old critics such as al-Asmai and Ibn al-Arabi who were followed by al-Jahidh and his disciple al-Mubarrid condemned poets for employing exaggeration and disregarding the truth. Kudama, on the other hand, considered the whole argument to be absolute nonsense, and declared that the poet should not be bound by any such rule. Indeed, many poets before Kudama, such as Bashehar, Abu-Nuwas and Abu-Tammam exaggerated freely. There is no doubt that Kudama's view was in fact an inevitable development. His authority in this matter was such that many eminent critics accepted his ideas completely. One cannot agree with "Von Grunebaum" in his assumption that "Kudama" was not popular among the Arab scholars. (1) If we mean by popularity "well-liked among a certain class", Kudama was indeed popular.

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(1) J. A. O. S. II; 1941



Most of the rules which he formulated are to be found in al-Askari's and Ibn Rashik's works. <sup>as of gaining a</sup>  
It is surprising indeed that al-Askari seldom mentioned Kudama, although he often quoted him. <sup>(1)</sup>  
Critics before Kudama, as far as the contents of poetry are concerned, did not make their requirements absolutely clear. Their rules, although few in number, were general and often they had no adequate terminology. With Kudama a clear realization of several requirements came into existence. Poetry was classified into four main kinds, namely: love, panegyric, satire and elegy. <sup>stated their purpose.</sup> This All critics, even Kudama, had very confused conceptions about description. They failed to come to any conclusion or to formulate any specific rule. <sup>in Ibn al-Malik,</sup> Panegyric in the opinion of all critics was so essential that they considered other subjects as subsidiaries. The reason for this preference was that critics studied the formal poetry whether addressed to the Caliphs or <sup>(2)</sup> influential men. <sup>critics had the same aim as that of</sup> In so doing they neglected many odes which dealt with individual experiences, <sup>as long as they could afford</sup>

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(1) Compare particularly, Sina'atun; 99 - 100 with

(1) Makd Ashshir; 33 - 34

(2) Ibid; 3/119



Panegyric which was at first merely appreciation for the outstanding deeds, came to be a means of gaining a livelihood. It had in former times been considered disgraceful to seek rewards through poetry and on this very ground al-Nabigha and Zuhair were reproached. Al-Asha, moreover, was considered the greatest beggar ever known. (1)

As time passed poets, after the manner of these pioneers, found in their poetry a profitable trade. They could not subject their career to the rules and dictates of the critics, which would have hindered their purpose. This became evident before the rise of the eminent encomiasts of the Abbasid era.

"Al-Hajjaj" once said to "al-Musawir Ibn abdul-Malik", "it is surprising that you still compose poetry even though you are very old". Al-Musawir said, "I compose in order to gain a livelihood. If you undertake to support me, I will cease composing". (2)

All the later encomiasts had the same aim as that of Musawir. It did not matter whether those who received praise were wicked or good so long as they could afford to bestow rewards.

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(1) Bayan; 1/136. al-Umdah; 1/49

(2) Ikd; 3/119



It was the requirements of the patrons which governed the form of praise. The procedure was consequently almost invariable, that is to say "Midha" opened with a love-prelude which was followed by praise. Al-Buhturi, who was the most perfect master, was subjected entirely to the preference of his patrons. Al-Jahidh justified the poets for seeking money through poetry. Kudama stressed what he called "the moral qualities" in the light of which all poets should compose their praise. This was probably a revolt against the practice of al-Buhturi and his masters who excessively praised the physical together with the moral qualities. While Kudama's tenets prevailed in critical circles and strongly influenced later critics such as al-Askari and al-Amidi, they failed to exert any considerable influence on the poets. Al-Askari while he partly adhered to Kudama's views, was also influenced by the poets themselves. He declared that "the best praise is that wherein one says that so and so is more generous or better than so and so".

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(1) Diwan al-Ma'ani; 1/43



Satire was always the counterpart of praise. Critics failed completely, whether early or later, to exert any influence on the poets. According to religious morals they required that satire should be chaste and should avoid vulgarity.

What the poets throughout the Abbasid era produced was an absolute contradiction to this rule. Di'bil was outstanding among those who used obscenity to an extent which has never been known before.

Ibn al-Rumi produced many similar odes. He, however, was the pioneer who excelled in producing other forms of satire, strikingly similar to the modern caricature. In the latter form, Ibn al-Rumi depended mainly on the physical features of men at whom his satire was directed. Kudama made it clear that this type of satire was a fault. Abu-Hilal and Ibn Rashik followed Kudama and consequently condemned Ibn al-Rumi and many other satirists.

Al-Jurjani from among the critics distinguished two kinds of satire, one of which conformed to the characteristics of Ibn al-Rumi's caricature. In addition he appreciated this form and thought highly of it. One may, therefore, assume that he was influenced by Ibn al-Rumi.

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(1) *al-Jurjani*: 2/136

(2) *al-Jurjani*: 291



"The best satire is that which follows the method of jibing and mockery and which falls between what is definite and what is in the form of innuendo . . . . and that, the meaning of which is easily understood, and which is easily remembered and makes its way swiftly to the heart. <sup>him</sup>

As for insult and obscenity they are merely abuse and there is nothing poetical about them except in the form of the <sup>(1)</sup> metre and the rhythm". <sup>The former is a praise of the</sup>

Love-poetry reached its culmination with al-Abbas. It is surprising that after al-Abbas love declined and the poets developed a new sort of love-poetry about young boys.

Al-Abbas was considered an ideal in the judgements of all critics. They unanimously admired his style, imagery and simplicity. The only adverse criticism I have found is this. Al-Abbas said addressing his mistress: <sup>indeed</sup>

<sup>have avoided</sup> "If you kill me, you will not escape the vengeance of the heroes of my people who are from Hanifa and Ijl". <sup>produced about relatives</sup>

Ibn Kotayba commented that, "the poet was mistaken in threatening the woman with the vengeance of his people.

If he were killed for love, it was a custom in such a case <sup>(2)</sup> among the poets to leave the slain man unavenged".

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(1) Wasatah; 17. al-Umdah; 2/136

(2) Ashshir; 525. Al-Muwashshah; 291



Abu-Nuwas was highly appreciated by al-Jahid. Some philologists, however, dismissed his poetry mainly on religious grounds.<sup>(1)</sup> Al-Jurjani in a long statement portrayed the defects and immoralities of Abu-Nuwas, but he did not condemn him. On the contrary he called him "the master and the leader".<sup>(2)</sup> Critics after the manner of Kudama made no difference between elegy and praise. The former is a praise of the dead and the latter of the living. They, however, stressed particularly the ideas which appertained to the formal elegy. In so doing Ibn Rashik committed a serious fault when he emphasized that "it is difficult to lament women and children because of the lack of material". Had the critics studied the Muwallads carefully they would indeed have avoided such a mistake. Formal elegy was in no way genuine or successful with many Muwallads. That which they produced about relatives and intimate patrons proves that Ibn Rashik was wrong.

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(1) See: Diwan Abu-Nuwas (introduction p. 10) for the opinions of Abu-ʿAmr al-Shaibani.

(2) Wasatah; 50



Dik al-Jin and Yakub Ibn al-Rabi' in imagery and genuine passion were far better than any of the formal elegists. In fine, the Muwallads consciously developed two kinds of poetry, namely: the formal and the informal.

Critics were deeply influenced by the formal productions and most of their rules were an echo of the Muwallads rather than of the old masters.

The informal poetry so developed that it broke away to a large extent from traditions. This was the first and perhaps the last attempt to emancipate poetry from the shackles of the critics and to allow it to follow what passion and individual preference dictated.

Sociologists have found many data concerning this subject, among the savage tribes of the present times who draw no line between poetry and singing, that is to say it is their custom to sing and to improvise verses simultaneously.

They can, however, hardly represent the words without the tune nor render the tune without the words.

The feet of their verses conform almost entirely to the simple tunes of their songs.

(1)  
Ethnologists supplied much useful material in this field but it is convenient to the extent of this research to illustrate in details the inter-relation of verse and song

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(1) See: John Brown: *Rise and Union of Poetry and Music*  
27-28. *Sound; poetic origins*: 9



among the Arabs in particular and to show to what extent the song governed the verse and how later prosodists

systematised the CHAPTER V.

Song and music with the Arabs were from the early days part and parcel of their life. They, like all primitives,

celebrated their Critics and Prosody. solemnities in the same manner by dance, song and verse.

"Qasida" signifies originally "a song verse" besides the It is believed that the feet of verse originally developed from the rhythms of music and dance which made up the pastimes, adorned the feasts and constituted the main element in the religion of the ancients.

Sociologists have found many data concerning this subject, among the savage tribes of the present times who draw no line between poetry and singing, that is to say it is their custom to sing and to improvise verse simultaneously.

They can, however, hardly represent the words without the tune nor render the tune without the words.

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Prosodists supplied much useful material in this field but it is convenient to the scheme of this research to illustrate in details the inter-relation of verse and song

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(1) See; John Browne; Rise and Union of Poetry and Music  
27 - 28. Pound; Poetic origins; 9



among the Arabs in particular and to show to what extent the song governed the verse and how later prosodists systematized the rules of prosody.

Song and music with the Arabs were from the early days part and parcel of their life. They, like all primitives, celebrated their tribal feasts and solemnities in the same manner by dance, song and verse.

"China'" signifies originally "a song verse" besides the particular meaning which is "raising the voice and continuing to sing without interruption".<sup>(1)</sup> "Huda'" also suggests "China'" and the verb "Hada" signifies in one sense "to compose poetry".

Thus, the Arab conceived a distinct connection between "China'" and poetry both of which were interchangeable. They have in addition to these two conceptions "Ika'" which means "rhythm" or measure. The verb signifies to<sup>(2)</sup> mark the rhythm of the song distinctly.

It is not improbable that the "Huda'" was known to the Arabs before the advent of song, that in fact Huda' was the initial tune from which they developed their song.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Lisan; 18/183. 19/376

(2) ~~Muruji~~ 8/94. Lisan; 10/290

(3) Muruj; 8/92



It is natural to expect the Bedouins to use tunes to relieve the tedium of travel and the monotony of the desert, and consequently these tunes came to be accompanied by verses. The former called "Huda'" and the latter "China'". The "Huda'" was not confined to the camel driver of the desert. The water carrier, the weaver, the gleaner and even the women of the tents sang at work just as they do to-day. Al-Mas'udi avers that the first development of "Huda'" was made through the "Buka'" or funeral lamentation of the women. Out of this arose the "Nawh" or elegy and the "Nasb" or secular song. The latter found expression on occasions of joy. Ibn Khaldun believes that poetry preceded singing, an idea which is contradicted by the natural existence and development of singing among the primitive tribes of the present day.

(1)  
(2)  
In the earliest times the Arabs possessed poetry in which they composed words in equal parts having a proportion between them in the number of their letters which were vowelled and quiescent. This proportion which is to be seen in the verses and in the vowelled and quiescent letter

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(1) Encyclopaedia of Islam (supp.); 81 - 1938



is but a very small part of the whole subject of the proportion of the voice, as it is set out in the books on music. They, however, knew nothing other than this one aspect of it because they had at that time no knowledge of science and did not know any craft. The way of the Bedouins was the fullest extent of their knowledge.

Subsequently, the cameleers sang the "Huda'" to their camels and the youths sang in their leisure time each repeating the tune of the other. <sup>(1)</sup> <sup>(2)</sup>

Ibn Rashik maintained that songs and poetry were born together. "All speech was prose but the Arabs needed to sing the nobility of their character, the excellence of their birth and to speak of their great days, their inaccessible encampments and their brave heroes and generous leaders . . . . they invented metres which they made the frame work for words. When their speech <sup>(2)</sup> fitted into the frame work they called it poetry".

Historians tried to fix the date of the beginning of poetry

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(1) Al-Mukaddimah; 427

(2) al-Umdah; 1/5

(3) al-Umdah; 1/409

(4) al-Umdah; 1/409

(5) al-Umdah; 1/409



One of them suggests that with "Nizar" poetry was born and the story goes that "when he fell down from his camel he shouted, "Wayada - Wayada" - Oh my hand -", a formula (1) which bears the simplest form of verse.

The story is unlikely to be authentic, but it shows clearly the co-existence of poetry and song.

The "China'" of the Arabs is generally of three kinds, namely: "Nasb", "Sinad", and "Hazaj". "Nasb" is the (2) song of the riders and the singing girls. Ibrahim of Mawsil said, "it is called elegy from which all sorts of "Huda'" developed.

(3) "Sinad" is the song of a slow measure and "Hazaj" is quick, (4) all of it. Dr. Farmer holds the opinion that the song

(5) called "Nasb" may have been connected originally with the Cult. The Bedouin view of life, however, is an indication that such a connection is unlikely. "Love, wine, gambling, hunting, the pleasure of song and romance . . . . these things he knew to be good. Beyond them he saw only the (6) grave". It is with these diversions that the "Nasb" should

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(1) Muruj; 8/92. Al-Mustatraf; 2/133

(2) Lisan; 2/858

(3) Alusi; Bulugh al-Arab; 1/409

(4) al-Umdah; 2/241

(5) A History of Arabic Music; 8

(6) Nicholson; Literary History of the Arabs; 136.

Alusi; 1/409



be connected as it is also natural to suppose that the 'Huda' is connected with the riding of the camels. The Arabs of the Jahiliya did not usually show any great interest in religion.

It is a fair assumption that through song which was frequently accompanied by a clumsy instrument and in the "Huda" of the camel drivers, Arabic verse came into existence. Poets composed for a long time, and a great deal of poetry was produced in this manner. Unfortunately, we have lost the productions of the early days which would show the evolution of metres. We are suddenly faced by the mature and highly developed poems of the Jahiliya which are thought to have been composed during the 150 years before the Mission of Muhammad. During this time the Arabs song improved to an amazing extent because of their connection with the civilized centres.

"It was from al-Hira that the Hijaz was borrowed about the close of the 6th century, the artistic song in the place of the "Nasb" and also the wooden-bellied lute called "Ud" in the place of the skin-bellied called "Mizhar".<sup>(1)</sup>

The emancipation of verse from music even in this era was not complete. The "Shair" was doubtless often as much

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(1) Muruj: 8/94, cited by Dr. Farmer: A History of Arabic Music: 52



a musician as a poet, although it would seem that he sometimes engaged a musician to chant his verse for him, in the same way as he would employ a reciter to recite them. (1) Brockelmann believes that "all the poems were meant to be chanted to a simple musical accompaniment and only this chant could do full justice to the subtle structure of the poetic language". (2) Alkama, one of the old poets, was a singer. Al-A'sha was called the "cymbal of the Arabs" (3) because he used to sing his poetry. He, however, (4) employed two girls to sing for him the Nasb. The idea of singing the verse persisted even during the days of Islam when we hear that al-Darimi and al-Hutay'a were singers and poets. (5) Some poets, however, studied the themes and tunes of singing in order to compose poetry which might be sung. Ibn Udayna was well known to have followed such a practice. (6)

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(1) Farmer; A History of Arabic Music; 9

(2) Encyclopaedia of Islam; 1/409

(3) Agh; 8/78

(4) Ibid; 8/79

(5) Zaidan; Tarikh Adab al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah; 1/59

(6) Agh (K); 2/237. Ibid; 4/96

(2) Lane (J.R.); Earliest Development of Arabic Music II. 135. Transactions of the 13th International Congress of Orientalists.

(3) Agh; 1/97

(4) Ibid; 2/129



Some poets ceased to make the rhythms of song govern their poetry. They relied on the sense of hearing and the patterns of the old poems, a practice which became customary at a later date. Al-Bakillani made it clear that some of the Arabs used to teach their children to compose poetry in imitation of the old metres such as the Tawil metre of "Kifa Nabki." (1) He denounced this method on the ground that it was illogical. One cannot agree with al-Bakillani in his criticism because such a method seems perfectly logical, particularly in the case of the ancient Arabs, for the teaching of composition. Many singers used, in like fashion, to mark the time of their song. Others preferred the use of the hand-drum or flute to keep them true to the time. (2) (3) Ibn Suraij, the accomplished singer, used a staff in his singing and so did his disciple al-Gharidh. (4) The second the Jam as when "Ikhwan al-Safa" produced the oldest, and indeed the most valuable, comparison between prosody and song. Their thesis was based on the vowelled and quiescent syllables of prosody, and on the stressed and unstressed accents of songs. It is apposite to quote their full statement.

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(1) Ifaz; 100

(2) Land (J.N.); Earliest development of Arabic Music II, 156. Transactions of the 19th International Congress of Orientalists.

(3) Agh; 1/97

(4) Ibid; 2/129



"Song is composed of melodies, and the melodies are composed of equal notes, and notes are built on the beats and the rhythm. The origin of them all is movement and pause. One says it and repeats it continually.

In like manner poetry is composed of equal parts and the parts are composed of feet and the feet are composed of "Sabab, Watad and Fasila" - chords, bars and stays.

The origin of them all is vowels and consonants.

Prosody is the measure of poetry by which we are able to recognize the perfect and imperfect. There are eight

feet in Arabic poetry, namely: Fa'ulun, Fa'ilun,  
Mafa'ilun, Mustaf'ilun, Mufafa'ilun, Fa'ilatun, Maf'ulatun,  
Maf'ulat, and mungilun. I have mentioned two books, one

These eight are composed of three roots which are: Sabab, Watah and Pasila. The "Sabab" consists of two letters, one of which has a vowel and the second the Jazm as when you say قال قَالَ and means for everything tell

The "Watad" consists of three letters, two of which have vowels and the third has the Jazm as when you say بَلَبْ نَعَمْ

The "Fasila" consists of four letters, three of which have vowels and one has Jazm as عِلَی (1) The origin of these three is vowels and consonants.

(1) There are practically two kinds of Sabab, Wataḍ, and Fasila. Ikhwan refer here to one of each, which is technically called: light Sabab, undivided Wataḍ, and minor Fasila. Other parts are:

(a) Heavy Sabab: ثَقِيلٌ  
(b) Divided Watad: تَابَعٌ  
(c) Major Fasila: فَسِيلٌ



As for the rules governing song and melody they also consist of three basic factors which are "Sabab, Watad and Fasila". The "Sabab" is one stressed beat followed by an unstressed as when one says تَبْ and repeats it continually.

The "Watad" consists of two stressed beats followed by an unstressed as تَبْ تَبْ repeated. The "Fasila" is three stressed beats followed by an unstressed one as when you say تَبْ تَبْ تَبْ. These are the origins and the rules in (1) all songs and melodies which have been composed".

This comparison of poetry with singing shows clearly the influence of the laws of singing on the whole system of al-Khalil who was himself regarded as a good authority on melodies and singing. Yakut mentioned two books, among his works on the subject, namely: "The Book of Rhythms" and "The Book of Melodies". He added that "his knowledge (2) of melodies gave birth to his knowledge of prosody".

Historians, anxious to find reasons for everything tell many stories about the way in which al-Khalil came to systematize his prosody. One of the stories, though of

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(1) Ikhwan al-Safa; 307 - 308. al-Mashrik; III, 1900

(2) Irshad; 4/181. Fihrist; 64. Raudhat; 273

Wafayat; 1/172

also Al-Jahid reproaches al-Khalil for being vain. He wrote books on grammar and prosody and considered himself an expert in theology and the composition of melodies. Thus, he wrote two books on these subjects - books in which one cannot be proud, and which have no importance. Al-Hayawan; 1/150

(1) Idem; 3/88



doubtful authenticity, shows that through the sound of the fuller's mallet the idea of prosody occurred to al-Khalil. He thought the sound pleasing and the fall upon the cloth harmonious, and said, "this sound shall surely lead to something". The story is doubtless fictitious but it is a useful illustration of the point at issue. However, were Al-Khalil's knowledge of melodies aided his work especially in distinguishing long and short syllables, on which he built his method. He, however, adopted many technical terms which prevailed among the singers such as: "Sinad", "Masb", "Thakil", "Khafif" and "Ramal". As a grammarian, however, he adopted the paradigm "Fa'ala" from his own field and made it the basic formula of scansion - dividing the word into syllables to form the appropriate feet of the metre.

Grammarians, it should be emphasized, did not, on any occasion, mention the contribution of music to prosody. Al-Khalil based his work on certain parts called Arkan - supports. These consist of roots ('Usul) which are three: Sabab, Wataa, and Fasila. The fundamental feet of the metres are the eight mentioned in Ikhwan al-Safa's statement. (1) By repeating any of these eight feet, and also by combining several of them, al-Khalil systematized fifteen metres, and one was subsequently added by al-Khifash.

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(1) Ikd; 3/88



All the sixteen metres were used by the ancient poets.

"Nothing is accepted from any poetry of perfect measures except that which conforms to these metres".<sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(2)</sup>  
He found many variations - Zihafat - in the old poetry to which he gave technical names in accordance with the place of the variation in the foot. "Zihafat", however, were accepted as legitimate and were considered metres in whole themselves.

We speak of the "Bahr al-Hazaj" as opposed to the "Hajaz" or "Ramal" etc., but we also call each of the various kinds of "Hazaj" a "Bahr". It is to be found in the nature of most Al-Khalil permitted the poets to employ certain variations on the grounds that they were used by the ancients on the one hand and they facilitate the art of the poet on the other.

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(1) Al-Muzhir; 1/195 poetry, or certainly the major part

(2) For the "Zihafat" see: word. The next thing that we

(a) Al-Umdah; 1/91 statement which prevailed among

(b) Ashshir; 29. 31. 145, from the time of its

(c) Liber Mafatih al-Ulum; 87. 190. 96 those who

have knowledge of this science and those who are

ignorant of it depend upon nothing in their poetry,

should they wish to oppose it, other than their taste.



It was in the later days, these licences came to be  
(1)  
condemned.

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(1) While Al-Askari was strict about the use of licences, he, under the influence of Kudama, maintained that prosody does not require to be studied because its rules come naturally to the bard. Here is the whole statement of Kudama.

"The two sciences of metre and rhyme, though peculiar to poetry, do not require to be studied because of the fact that they are to be found in the natures of most people without the necessity of study. This is indicated by the fact that all the best poetry which is used as a criterion belongs to those people who composed before the compiling of books on prosody and rhythms. Were it in fact necessary to invoke these licences, all such poetry, or certainly the major part of it, would become absurd. The next thing that we see is the general contentment which prevailed among the people, from this science, from the time of its authors until the present day. Indeed, those who have knowledge of this science and those who are ignorant of it depend alike on nothing in their poetry, should they wish to compose it, other than their taste.



(1)

"It is desirable that the use of licences should be avoided even though it is permitted by the masters of Arabic language, for indeed it is bad and makes speech ugly and detracts from its beauty. The ancients only used it because they were unaware of its ugliness and because they were pioneers, for the first beginnings are always faulty. Nor was there any criticism of their poetry. Had it been subject to criticism, and had its faults been eliminated in the same way that contemporary poets are criticized, and their composition purged of all faults, these licences would have been avoided".<sup>(1)</sup>

Grammarians after al-Khalil continued to write books on prosody. Al-Akhfash, al-Jirmi, al-Mazini, al-Zajjaj, al-Mubarrid, al-Farisi, al-Dhabbi and Niftawaihi, are the eminent masters among many others.<sup>(2)</sup> We do not possess their works to find their contributions, but one who is aware of their method of teaching may well imagine the nature of their books. They doubtless either explained or abridged the whole system of al-Khalil in order to assist their students. Some of them, nevertheless, systematized new rules. Al-Akhfash, as has been stated, set out a new metre. He, in addition, reconsidered the variations and

(1) *Wurud*: 7/27. *Maqarib al-Dhabbi*: 2/214

(1) *Sina'at al-Lughah*: 112. *Yatima*: 4/289. *Al-Mushir*: 2/49

(2) *Fihrist*: 81. 85. 91. 94. 97. 102.

*Irshad*: 1/315. 2/76



put forward many points overlooked by al-Khalil.<sup>(1)</sup>

The poet Abul-Abbas al-Nashi' (293/904) revised the whole system of prosody but his revision had no significance in that it did not come to be popular.<sup>(2)</sup>

Al-Jawhari (386/997) was the only authority regarded as a second discoverer of metres. Ibn Rashik pointed out that "men after al-Khalil differed in their ability to produce new ideas until the time of al-Jawhari who explained the findings of al-Khalil and set them out clearly and briefly. The masters of the time and the great masters of prosody, refer to his methods".<sup>(2)</sup>

It is more convenient to quote the full statement of al-Umdah because it is the main source of information. "The first respect in which al-Jawhari differed from al-Khalil was that the latter made the feet to which poetry must conform eight, of which two, namely: Fa'ulun, Fa'ilun, consisted each of five letters, and six, namely: Mafa'ilun, Fa'ilatun, Mustaf'ilun, Mufa'latun, Mutafa'ilun, Maf'ulat, which consisted of seven letters. Al-Jawhari omitted the measure "Maf'ulat" and put forward evidence

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(1) Al-Fusul; 1/135

(2) Muruj; 7/87. Shadarat al-Dahab; 2/214

(3) al-Umdah; 1/88. Yatima; 4/289. Al-Muzhir; 1/49  
Irshad; 2/266 - 273. Nuzhat al-Alibba'; 418



that it is a modified form of "Mustaf'ilun" . . . because he maintained that "were it a genuine measure, we could decompose a metre from it alone as we compose metres from the rest of the feet. Al-Khalil reckoned the types of metres to be fifteen and confined them to five circles but al-Jawhari put them under twelve headings - Al-Mutadarak included - seven of them are of single feet and five are composite. He said "the first of them is "Mutakarab", then "Hazaj", and "Tawil" comes between them and is composed of them. Other metres similarly classified. Moreover, he dropped out four metres, namely: "Sari'", "Munsarih", "Mujtathth", and "Muktadhab", on the grounds that they are similar to certain metres in their feet. (1) "Sari'", for instance, is similar to Basit; "Mujtathth" is another form of Khafif; "Munsarih" and "Muktadhab" are none derived from Rajaz. He mentioned him give his procedure or

(2)  
A(1) al-Umdah; 1/89 speaks of metres other than those of al-Khalil. "Madia" which consists of three sorts of "Arudh" and four sorts of "Dharb" as set out originally, was employed in a fourth "Arudh" and a fifth "Dharb". The former is like:

بالعيني لا ينأى  
أدبعها مع شجاع

The latter is like:

يا بكر لا تنوردا  
ليس ذا عني ونا

(1) Fihrist; 107. Irshad; 3/367

(2) Muruj; 7/87



(1)  
Strictly speaking, al-Jawhari's revision was the first reaction against the system of al-Khalil which took practical form. His device was so simple that every student can master all the fundamental principles, and can apply them without difficulty. Unfortunately, this system, although referred to with respect, was not popular. Parallel to the movement of the grammarians who regarded the finding of al-Khalil as faultless, we find another school consisting of a few exponents who opposed al-Khalil and who exposed the defect of his prosody. ~~These were never used.~~

The first authority who repudiated the whole system was "Barzakha al-Arudhi". He devoted himself to prosody, on which he wrote three books, in one of them he endeavoured to prove that the whole system was a fiction. (1)

(2)  
It is a pity that we have lost all of his books, for none of the authorities who mentioned him give his procedure or arguments. who, as well as the Arabs, adopted Arabic prosody

(2)  
Al-Mas'udi held that poets employed metres other than those of al-Khalil. "Madid" which consists of three sorts of "Arudh" and four sorts of "Dharb" as set out originally, was employed in a fourth "Arudh" and a fifth "Dharb". The former is like:

ما العيني لا تنام  
دعها سح سجام

The latter is like:

يا بكر لا تنودا  
ليس زاحين ونا

(1) Fihrist; 107. Irshad; 2/367

(2) Muruj; 7/87



(1)  
 "Abul Ala' al-Ma'arri" alleged that "all pre-Islamic poetry, from which al-Khalil developed his system, was composed in a very few metres, namely: Tawil, Basit, Wafir, and Kamil". Then he said "as for the short metres they were employed to a great extent only in the post-Islamic era, and occasionally by the poets of al-Hira. Al-Khalil set out metres which in actuality never existed and, on the other hand, neglected many odes which could have furnished him with new metres. Centuries should continue their work."

The metres of "Mujtathth" and "Mudhari'" were never used. "Madid", however, which was included in the first circle (2) was employed by one pre-Islamic poet. because it comes near

Many poems of the Jahilees do not conform to the recognized metres - poems such as that which is attributed to (3) "Adi Ibn Zaid", two others by al-Murakkish (4) and "Sulami Ibn Rabi'a" (5). This is called because it resembles the "Kharib". Ibn

Persians who, as well as the Turks, adopted Arabic prosody found no room in their poetry for the favourite metres of the Arabs. "Tawil", "Madid", and "Kamil" did not appeal

(1) Al-Fusul; 1/212 also been called "charib" - the rare

(2) That was Parafa in his ode

أشجاء الربيع أم قدومه أم رماذ دارس حمة

(3) Al-Fusul; 1/131

(4) Sina'atain; 4

(5) Tibrizi, Sharh al-Hamasa; 3/83



to them. They employed, however, new short metres which never existed in Arabic poetry such as "Karib", "Mushakil", and "Jadid".<sup>(1)</sup><sup>(2)</sup><sup>(3)</sup> The existence of these metres provides a clear evidence that that system which was first developed by al-Khafil could be modified and developed. It is neither complete nor fully adequate. No doubt, it is an excellent survey of the styles of the ancient poetry, but can never be regarded solely as the basis on which poets throughout all centuries should confine their work.

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(1) This metre has been called "near" because it is modern. Some say that it was called so because it comes near the Hazaj and Mudhari'. Its formula is:

Mafa'ilu, Mafa'ilu, Fa'ilatun (Twice).

(2) The word "Mushakil" means "similar", and the metre was thus called because it resembles the "Karib". Its formula is:

Fa'ilatu, Mafa'ilu, Mafa'ilu (Twice).

(3) This metre has been called "Jadid" or "the new metre" because it is one of the modern metres; for which reason it has also been called "Gharib" - the rare metre -. Its formula is:

Fa'ilatun, Fa'ilatun, Mafa'ilun (Twice).

It seems natural to expect the emergence of new metres under



the Abbasids as an outcome of the influence of singing on poetry.

## CHAPTER VI.

In the Jahiliya and ~~early~~ Arabs adapted their song to their poetry. Thus, they found the long metres fitting to the popular melodies. The short metres were scarcely used

### Poets and prosody.

at ~~all~~. Two metres appeared particularly, namely: *Izmil* and *Basit*. The former was called "Hakub" - the hidden -

(1)  
Prosody was formulated in the early Abbasid era. From

that time forward, there was no successful attempt to break away, or form new metres.

Critics regarded any attempt towards developing new metres as an absolute corruption of the conventions.

This attitude hindered the possibility of any new contribution to prosody. One may find a few odes which have odd metres. The authorities who quoted them intended merely to show their peculiarities. But it is possible to regard these odes as new contributions to the metrical stock rather than merely as disgraceful innovations.

Had the critics exercised a more tolerant attitude they would have succeeded in developing a new approach in the study of metre.

It was neither practical nor logical to dismiss out of hand everything which did not conform to the established system. It seems natural to expect the emergence of new metres under



the Abbasids as an outcome of the influence of singing on poetry. <sup>(1)</sup> <sup>(2)</sup> In the Jahiliya and Islam the Arabs adapted their song to their poetry. Thus, they found the long metres fitting to the popular melodies. The short metres were scarcely used at all. Two metres appealed particularly, namely: Tawil and Basit. The former was called "Rakub" - the ridden - because it was so frequently used. <sup>(1)</sup> <sup>(2)</sup> Metres such as "Mudhari", Muktabhab and Mujtathth were never employed. <sup>(2)</sup> <sup>(3)</sup> Al-Khalil, failing to find any pattern for these metres in the old poetry, was compelled to compose his own examples. <sup>(4)</sup> <sup>(5)</sup> After al-Khalil's era the long metres began gradually to lose popularity, and the short ones came into great prominence. It seems that singing was undergoing a <sup>(4)</sup> of similar transition. There was a new school in singing which actively endeavoured to popularize the light tunes and to assimilate the Arab songs to those of the Byzantines.

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(1) Al-Fusul; 212

(2) Ibid; 132 here the translation of Dr. Farner for

"Thakili" and "Khafifi".

(3) In 1924, for fifty years.

(4) Ibid (12); 6/234, cited by Dr. Farner.

Arabic name.



Mukharik, the eminent singer, said " my master who taught me singing had a Byzantine slave who used to sing tunes of pleasant melodies in Greek. My master said to me, ". . . . . take these Byzantine tunes and turn them into Arabic songs"<sup>(1)</sup>.  
"The first to corrupt classical singing was "Ibrahi<sup>(2)</sup> Ibn al-Mahdi". He set a precedent for the people, which gave them courage to make further alterations".  
This movement appealed to many other singers such as "Shariya", "Mukharik" and "Alluya"<sup>(3)</sup>. It was, however, the source of a continuous dispute with the traditional school which was led by "Ishak al-Mawsili". The outcome of this dispute was that the advocates of the new modes succeeded in popularizing the "Khafif" - light tunes.<sup>(4)</sup>  
Thus "Thakil" - serious - which was the favourite metre of "Ma'bad" was no longer universally popular.

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"-----characteristic of the Arabs' song", as

- (1) Agh (K); 5/279 that they divided their melodies in  
(2) Agh; 9/35 the poetic metres. The Persians, on the  
(3) Agh; 9/34 ched and contracted the words until they  
(4) I adopted here the translation of Dr. Farmer for  
metres "Thakil" and "Khafif". to something which is not

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(1) In Agh: "for sixty years" . . .

(2) Agh (K); 6/284, cited by Dr. Farmer: A History of Arabic Music.



(1)  
Hazaj and Makhuri, light melodies, were in great demand.  
"Hakam al-Wadi" secured high fame in "Hazaj" and abandoned  
other styles. It was not an accident that "Hakam" made  
"Hazaj" his profession. The reason was that the public  
paid generously for hearing it. Here is a very interesting  
story to show to what extent "Hazaj" was in demand and how  
profitable it was. al-Jahid had foreseen this eventuality  
"Hakam al-Wadi, being upbraided by his son for pandering  
to the taste of the public in this way with Hazaj rhythm,  
answered him, "my son, for thirty years have I sung in the  
Thakil rhythmic modes and hardly gained a living, yet in the  
three years of singing in the Hazaj I have earned more money  
that thou hast seen in they life". (2)  
Under the influence of the Byzantine and Persian songs,  
new movement found general acceptance. The long metres  
naturally did not fit the modern melodies. to fit the new  
"The distinctive characteristic of the Arabs' song", as  
al-Jahid put it, "was that they divided their melodies in  
accordance with the poetic metres. The Persians, on the  
other hand, stretched and contracted the words until they  
conformed to the rhythms of the tunes. They made their  
metrical composition conform to something which is not

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(1) In Agh: "for sixty years" . . .

(2) Agh (K); 6/284, cited by Dr. Farmer; A History of  
Arabic Music.



(1)  
metrical". said about Abul-Atahiya that "poetry was so  
The new school, therefore, dealt mostly with alien tunes  
wherein the poetry conformed to the melodies."  
Poets were compelled by this development to compose in  
conformity with the new tunes. Consequently, the short  
metres made their appearance. It is probable that al-Khalil had foreseen this eventuality  
and, for this reason, he permitted to the poets the free  
use of variations - Zihafat - . The general use of these  
variations would have been adequate to meet the requirement  
of the singers. Some of the long metres could be turned  
into short ones if certain alterations occurred.  
The metre "Ramal", for instance, which is in its perfect  
form "Pa'ilatun" could be transformed into a quick metre,  
merely by shortening the first long vowel. Other long  
metres could be thus manipulated and made to fit the new  
requirement.  
The Muwallads, although they employed these variations to  
excess, were not satisfied. They endeavoured, after the  
manner of the singers, to popularize something which was  
altogether new.

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(1) Bayan; 1/244



Ibn Kotaiba said about Abul-Atahiya that "poetry was so easy to him that he often composed poetry in which he departed from the accepted metres of the Arabs".<sup>(1)</sup>

One cannot agree with this opinion. It was not the ease of composition which impelled Abul-Atahiya to develop new metres, but rather the inevitable necessity of adapting his poetry to the preference of his generation.

This applies, moreover, to the generality of the poets of this era.<sup>(2)</sup>

It is not proposed to study the poets who popularized merely the short metres, but we must rather turn to two poets who developed modes which were altogether new, they are Abul-Atahiya and Razin al-Arudhi.

<sup>(3)</sup> He was so confident in his "greater than prosody" and adapted himself to the new movement.

Thus most of his poetry has light metres. There are in his "Diwan" about forty odes in "Kharif", thirty in "Munsarik" and twenty five in "Sari".

Abul-Ata' said that "al-Machari" metre was unknown to the Arabs . . . . it was used by Abul-Atahiya in his odes.<sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) Ashshir; 497

(2) Ash; 3/126

(3) Ashshir; 497. Muraj; 7/37. al-Muwashshah; 262

(4) Ash; 3/131

(4) al-Fusul; 1/131



In addition, he composed odes of peculiar metres, if judged by the system of al-Khalil. Critics who condemned such a practice as mere innovation, neglected to furnish adequate examples of his work.

A few examples only have come down to us which show clearly this poet was prone to depart from the accepted metres.

Abul-Faraj said, "Abul-Atahiya employed elegant metres which had never been known to the ancients". (1)

Ibn Kotaiba, al-Mas'udi, and al-Marzubani made similar statements. (2)

It seems that he was not satisfied with the traditional prosody. Neither did he consider himself bound to conform to its rules. He was so confident in his metrical power that he claimed himself to be "greater than prosody" and adapted himself to the new movement. (3)

Thus most of his poetry has light metres. There are in his "Diwan" about forty odes in "Khafif", thirty in "Munsarih" and twenty five in "Sari".

Abul-Ala' said that "al-Mudhari" metre was not known to the Arabs . . . . it was used by Abul-Atahiya in his ode:- (4)

أيا عتب ما يضر . . . لك أن تطلق صفادي

with a fuller and heard the sound of the hammer.

(1) Agh; 3/126

(2) Ashshir; 497. Muruj; 7/87. al-Muwashshah; 262

(3) Agh; 3/131

(4) al-Fusul; 1/131



In addition, he composed odes of peculiar metres, if judged by the system of al-Khalil. Critics who condemned such a practice as mere corruption, neglected to furnish adequate examples of his work.

A few examples only have come down to us which show clearly his contribution to prosody.

Al-Mas'udi quoted

قال القاضي لما عوتب  
هَذَا عَذْرُ الْقَاضِي وَأَقْلَبَ  
هَمْزُ الْقَاضِي بَيْتٌ يُطْرَبُ  
مَا فِي الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مُذْنَبٌ

"Some men said," he added, "that the Arabs never employed this metre, neither was it mentioned by al-Khalil or any other prosodist".<sup>(1)</sup>

These two lines run "Fa'lun" repeated four times, and there is no doubt that this is an invention of the poet.

Moreover, it seems that up to the days of al-Mas'udi they were never used.

This metre, however, became common in later centuries and was considered to be a modification of the metre

"Mutadarak". It was called "striking the Nakus" because the verse consists of long syllables.

Ibn Kotaiba said that "Abul-Atahiya was sitting one day with a fuller and heard the sound of the hammer. He imitated that in his poetry".<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Muruj; 7/87

(2) Ashshir; 497



Only these two lines were quoted:

للمنون دائراً ..... تَ يَدْرَن صَرْفَهَا  
هَنْ يَنْتَقِينَا وَاحِداً فَواحداً

The metre is "Fa'ilun, Mafa'ilun" and it is obvious that it is new.

There is another interesting point in Ibn Kotaiba's story. It is similar to the story which was told about al-Khalil when he decided to systematize his rules.

However, it seems that Abul-Atahiya developed his metre from "Rajaz" which is "Mustaf'ilun".

Presumably, he had in mind "Mutafilun" and dropped out the second letter of the measure in the first word only.

"Mutaf'ilun" becomes "Fa'ilun" followed by "Mafa'ilun".

If we add the dropped letter we would have the imaginary metre:

وللمنون دائراً ..... وَتَن يَدْرَن صَرْفَهَا  
وَهَنْ يَنْتَقِينَا وَاحِداً فَواحداً

Apart from the two examples, above mentioned, we possess nothing outstanding. Indeed, they reflect a minor side of a serious movement which might have brought a revolution in prosody.



Only Yekté quoted an ode of thirteen verses to demonstrate  
the unusual practice of the poets. Here is the ode:

Razin the Metrician.

Two metricians, we are told, opposed al-Khalil. The first was "Barzakh" who has been previously mentioned, and the other was "Razin". Unfortunately, both of them were neglected by the historians. We know nothing of the former and very little of the latter.

Razin was the pupil of "Abdullah", the metrician, son of Karun, son of al-Samayda' of Basra.

Abdullah studied under al-Khalil until he became an informed authority on prosody. He was, in addition to this, a good poet who dedicated his poetry to Al-Sulaiman, son of Ali of Basra.

It seems that he was not content with the system of al-Khalil. Consequently, he produced poetry of peculiar metres. Razin followed his master and produced similar poetry.

Abul-Faraj thought well of his method, but he did not quote any example from his poetry.

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(1) Agh; 6/11

(2) Irshad; 4/209

(3) Agh; 6/11



Only Yakut quoted an ode of thirteen verses to demonstrate the unusual practice of the poet. Here is the ode: <sup>(1)</sup>

غُدُوَّةُ أَهْبَتَاكَ الدَّقْبُولُ	تَقَرَّبُوا أَجْمَاعَهُمُ لِلرَّحِيلِ
مَنْفَرِدًا بِهَلَاكِ مَا وَدَّعُولُ	خَلْفُوكَ ثُمَّ مَضُوا بِدَلِيلِ
مَدْحَةٍ مَحْبَرَةٍ فِي أَلْوَلُ	مَنْ هَلَاخَ الدَّيْرُ أَخِي الْمَلُوكَاتِ
فَوْقَ نَخْرٍ جَارِيَةٍ تَسْتَبِيلُ	تَرَادَهُ كَوَاسِطَةً فِي النَّظَامِ
أَفْلَحَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَجْبُولُ	يَا بَنَ سَادَةِ زَهْرٍ كَالنَّجُومِ
مَحْيَا سِيَادَةَ مَا أَدْلُولُ	إِذْ نَفَسْتِ مَدْحَهُمُ بِالْفِعَالِ
فِيهِ كُلُّ مَكْرَمَةٍ وَفِيلُ	ذَوِ الرَّئَاسَتَيْنِ أَهْلُوكَ الْبَحْبِ
مَحْيَا بَنَ سِنَةِ غَارِ بِيَتُولُ	ذَوِ الرَّئَاسَتَيْنِ وَأَنْتَ الذَّانِ
وَالْعَبَادُ مَا لَكُمَا مِنْ شَرِيكَ	لَمْ تَزَلْ أَحْيَا سَبْدُ
مَنْتَهَى الْغِيَاثِ وَمَأْوَى الضَّرِيكَ	أَنْتَا إِذَا قَطَعَ الْعَالَمُونَ
وَفِي الْوَعْدِ إِذَا ضُطْرِبَ الْفَكِيدُ	يَا بَنَ سَجَلِ الْحَسَنِ الْمُسْتَفَاعِ
مَقَرَّعَ لَغَيْرِكَ يَا بَنَ الْمَلُوكِ	مَا لَمْ أَلْحَ عَلَيْهِ الزَّمَانُ
مَطْلَبُ سَوَالِكِ حَائِشِي أَخِيكَ	لَدَوْلٍ وَرَأْدِكَ لِلرَّائِغِينَ

It seems that the metre which Razin had in mind was:

Abul Ala' in one of his letters condemned Razin and

referred particularly to this ode. <sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Irshad; 6/16

(2) Rasa'il Abul-Ala' (English version); 84



The ode runs, "Fa'ilun, Mufa'ilatun, Fa'ilat", and seven variations occur. The variant is underlined.

(a) Line two: called that this process was not permitted by al Fa'ilun, Mufa'ilatun, Fa'ilat, + Mufa'ilun, the ( ) Mufa'ilatun, Fa'ilat.

(b) Line three: Mustaf'ilun, Mufa'ilatun, Fa'ilat, + Fa'ilun, Mufa'ilatun, Fa'ilat.

(c) Line six: variations can be justified on the grounds of 11 Fa'ilun, Mufa'ilatun, Fa'ilat, + Fa'ilun, Mufa'ilatun, Maf'ul.

(d) Line seven: Fa'ilun, Mufa'ilatun, Fa'ilat, + Fa'ilun, Mufa'ilatun, Fa'ul.

(e,f) Line eleven: is so, then one may be in a position to claim Fa'ilun, Mufa'ilatun, Fa'ilat, + Mufa'ilun, Mufa'ilatun, Fa'ul.

(g) Line thirteen: Fa'ilun, Mufa'ilatun, Fa'ilat, + Fa'ilun, Mufa'ilun, Fa'ilat.

It seems that the metre which Razin had in mind was:

Mustaf'ilun, Mufa'ilatun, Fa'ilat, + Mustaf'ilun, Mufa'ilatun, Fa'ilat.

The appearance of "Mufa'ilun" in line eleven and line thirteen as well as "Mustaf'ilun" in line three, suggests that this is so. What Razin presumably did was this: he dropped



out a light cord, "Sabab Khafif" from "Mustaf'ilun" and the remainder "Taf'ilun" formed the measure "Fa'ilun".

It should be recalled that this process was not permitted by al-Khalil. The poet was allowed to drop out the (س) (ت) (ست) of (مستفعل) but not the whole light cord (ميس).

Razin used such licence for the first time.

The rest of his variations can be justified on the grounds of licences permitted by al-Khalil.

They run: *Mafa'ilun, Fa'ilun, (1) Mafa'ilun, Maf'ulun.*  
*Mafa'ilun, Fa'ilun, (2) Mafa'ilun, Fa'ilun.*  
*Mustaf'ilun, Fa'ilatun, (3) Mustaf'ilun, Maf'ulun.*  
*Mafa'ilun, Fa'ilun, (4) Mafa'ilun, Maf'ulun.*  
 This metre is not to be found anywhere in the accepted scheme. It would appear to be entirely new, and as yet unclassified. If further research can establish beyond doubt, that this is so, then one may be in a position to claim that the total number of distinct metres known to the Arab poets was seventeen, and not, as formerly held sixteen. It is clear that, with the exception of the third line, they run in the metre which is "Haza". The third is out of place and it was probably added to these lines by mistake.

In the Diwan of "Muslim Ibn al-Walid", there are two odes which are called "Muwalladah". They are:

(2)  
 Apart from Abul-Atahiya and Razin's contributions we have nothing else of value.

There are some peculiarities in a few odes, but they can be explained according to the traditional system.

(1) Wasatah; 57

(2) Diwan; 154

(3) Diwan; 183



Abu-Nuwas, for instance, was condemned by al-Jurjani for  
(1)  
these lines:

The Muwallads, in addition to what we have already  
mentioned, are:   
أحرقاً معنوها رأيت كل من كان  
صار المقدم الوجيها في ذا الزمان  
نوّته تنويها يارب نذل وضع  
أريدته تشويها هجوته كليها

They run: Mafa'ilun, Fa'ulun, (1) Mafa'ilun, Maf'ulun.

Muwallad: Mafa'ilun, Fa'ulun, (2) Mafa'ilun, Fa'ulun.

Mustaf'ilun, Fa'ilatun, (3) Mustaf'ilun, Maf'ulun.

Mafa'ilun, Fa'ulun, (4) Mafa'ilun, Maf'ulun.

It is clear that, with the exception of the third line,  
they run in one metre which is "Hazaj". The third is out  
of place and it was probably added to these lines by  
mistake.

In the Diwan of "Muslim Ibn al-Walid", there are two odes  
which are called "Muwalladah". They are:

(2) يا أيها المعود قد شفق الصدود

and (3) نبا به الوساد وامتنع الرقاد

(See: Shadharat; 5/111 - 112.)

(1) Wasatah; 57

(2) Diwan; 154

(3) Diwan; 183



The first is "Rajaz" and the second is "Sari'"; and there is nothing unusual about them.

The Muwallads, in addition to what we have already mentioned, employed what was technically called "Ighram".

It is prose which can be divided into verses. The rhyme might be situated in the middle of a word, thus necessitating the reading of the following half of the word as the opening syllable of the next line.

Here is one example which Abul-Ala' called "typically Muwallad"<sup>(1)</sup>.

أبا بكر لقد جاءتك من يحيى بن منصور الكأس فخذها منه  
صرفاً غير مزوجة جنبك الله أبا بكر من السوء.

When it is divided into verse it runs:

أبا بكر لقد جاءت ..... لك من يحيى بن منصور  
ر الكأس فخذها منه ..... صرفاً غير مزو  
جة جنبك ..... الله أبا بكر من السوء

(1) Al-Fusul; 447. Ibn al-Imad mentioned a similar example to Abul al-Ala' himself.

See: Shadarat; 5/111 - 112.



Finally, it is strange to read in "Al-Fusul" that "the Mutakarib" metre which is "Pa'ulan" could be transferred into another metre. This line is given as a pattern:

أنت يا قوتة عندنا في الرضى غير مقلية عندنا في الغضب

The metre of this line is "Pa'ilun" repeated four times which is the "Mutadarak". It is not a form of "Al-Mutakarib" as Abul-Ala' maintained but an independent metre.

His system, although accepted by the grammarians, was opposed in other quarters. Some metricians and poets declared that it was artificial. Scarce information on this subject has, however, been furnished. What has come down to us is only a small part of a great volume of opinion aimed at emancipating poetry from traditions. The grammarians after al-Khalil were extremely strict in examining poetry. They went beyond him by regarding certain licences as shameful. This attitude was probably

a reaction against the jurists who employed licences to

(1) 134

The grammarians, however, failed to stop the progress of the new movement.



Parallel to the development of singing which was brought about by assimilating alien melodies, a great development took place in poetry. The light metres appealed to the

Summary.

majority of the poets and singers.

In addition to this, new metres appeared. Abul-Atashiya developed a light form from "Rajaz" and another metre

Music and singing played an effective part in the evolution of prosody. Al-Khalil based his rules mostly on the commonly accepted notes and tunes of singing. Thus, he adopted a number of technical terms which belonged properly to singing. Contributions. Apart from the stanza we have

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The grammarians after al-Khalil were extremely strict in examining poetry. They went beyond him by regarding certain licences as shameful. This attitude was probably a reaction against the Muwallads who employed licences to excess. The frivolous nature of the occasion upon which

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Parallel to the development of singing which was brought about by assimilating alien melodies, a great development took place in poetry. The light metres appealed to the majority of the poets and singers.

In addition to this, new metres appeared. Abul-Atahiya developed a light form from "Rajaz" and another metre which was considered to be a modification of al-Mutadarak. "Razin" used a new metre which runs:

"Fa'ilun, Mufa'llatun, Fa'ilat".

As far as rhyme is concerned, the Muwallads made no outstanding contributions. Apart from the stanza we have one example of blank verse.

Al-Amin asked Abu-Nuwas once, "can you compose poetry without rhyme"? "Yes", Abu-Nuwas said, and he improvised these lines:  
(1)

ولقد قلت لليلة قولي      من بعيد لمن يحبك      إشارة قبله  
فاشارت بحصم ثم قالت      من بعيد خلافتولي      إشارة لدا  
فتفتت ساعة ثم اتي      قلت لبغل عند ذلك      إشارة امش

The ode has no significance for it is absurd and reflects clearly the frivolous nature of the occasion upon which it was composed.



### Conclusions.

6. During the course of this development the critics evolved certain rules the observation of which they

1. Philologists and grammarians studied literature as a means towards elucidating the Koran. In so doing they established a convention which continued until the days of al-Farazdak. Before his time no serious attempt was made to break away from the tradition thus established. 1. apparent in the Islamic era when
2. Bashshar made the first efforts to emancipate the language.. It was the flourishing civilization in Baghdad and the consequent changes which took place in the life of the Arabs which gave the first impetus to this movement. details of those who opposed his
3. Bashshar and his followers succeeded in establishing their new literary forms and critics were eventually compelled to recognize the new trends and to admit the validity of the modern poetry. Some said
4. As a consequence of this, the philologists of the classical era became the objects of severe criticism.
5. The Muwallads were responsible for a fundamental alteration in the form of the Kasida and in its subject matter. Panegyric alone survived in its original form.



6. During the course of this development the critics evolved certain rules the observation of which they regarded as essential to poetry.

They were, however, unable to impose these rules in their entirety upon the poets. This was particularly the case in satire. *Baghdad 1314/1896*

7. Poetry and song had a common origin. Their inter-relation was still apparent in the Islamic era when certain poets practised both singing and composition. *(a) M'ashid al-Fannan. Egypt 1316/1898*

8. Al-Khalil's knowledge of song was a powerful factor in influencing his systematization of prosody.

His system, however, remained incomplete. Historians furnished but few details of those who opposed his system. *Abul Atahiya (a) Alaswar al-Zahiyah; edited by Shikhe. Beirut, 1888*

9. New trends in music particularly those of Byzantine origin had considerable influence upon the Muwallad's *Abu-Hawas (a) Diwan Abi-Sawa. Egypt 1898*

10. Poets allowed themselves freedom. Some said excessive freedom in handling metres.

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